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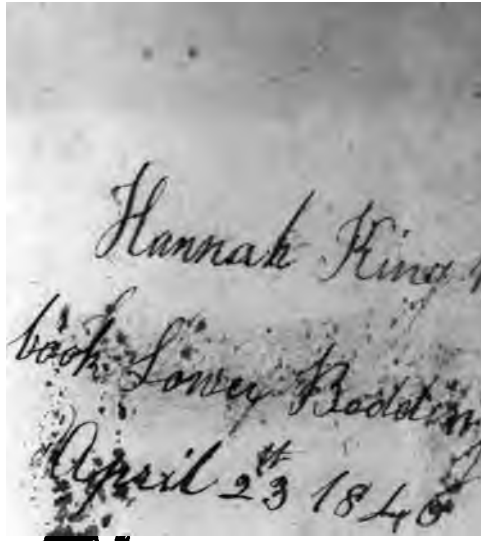
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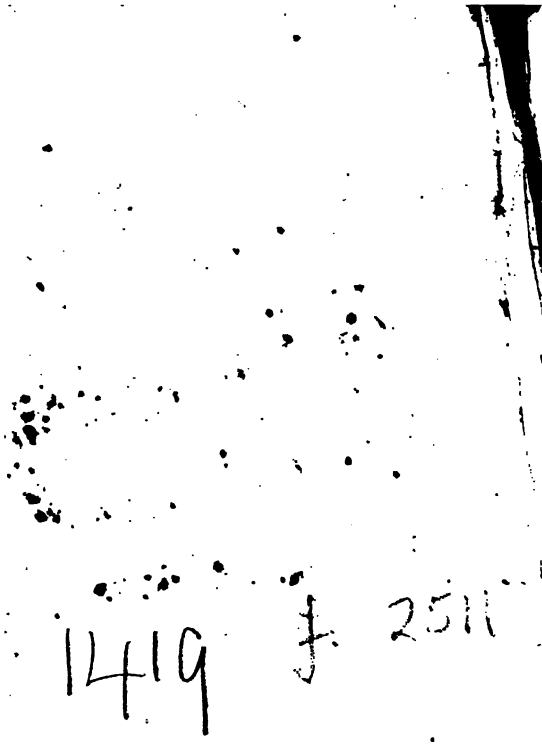
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CHRISTIAN

Reflections.

Christian
REFLECTIONS
FOR
EVERY DAY IN THE MONTH.

Translated from the French
BY THE
REV. JOHN BIRDSALL.

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THE

Translator's Preface.

THE little book, intitled Pensées Chrétiennes, &c. *from which this translation has been made, was printed at Paris in the year* 1718, *as the title-page sheweth; but who the author was I know not; nor does it appear whether this was or was not the first and original edition.*

In the lettres de privilege, *granted by the King of France to the Librarian or Bookseller* Robustel, *of the date of December* 22, 1717, *the title of this book is mentioned among other books authorised therein to be printed. To all which other works*

nlargement of the meditations,
flections of Bouhours *bear no*
o those here given.
Reflections is subjoined an Ex-
the Purity of Morals required
tian Religion, translated from
k.

J. B.

PREFACE.

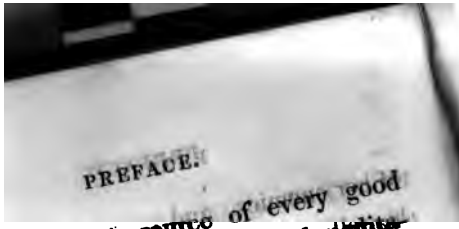
AS the life of the greatest part of r
is full of labour, and much occupied v
temporal affairs, which distract the m
and steal away the heart; it has b
thought that nothing would prove m
useful to such persons than to supply th
with the reading of some important tr
of religion for every day in the month: l
ing open the same and placing it in its t
light by examples taken from the H
Scriptures and the Fathers of the Chu
And it is hoped that the mind being
lightened by the clearness of the exposit

will learn by degrees to occupy itself to its spiritual improvement amidst the turmoils of the world; and that the heart being penetrated with a sense of the truths contained will retain the impression; so as to find itself borne on towards God and disengaged from creatures.

External objects find admittance into the mind through all the senses, and attracting it by the exhibition of things from without, steal it from itself, and cause it to lose sight of God, when it has no longer any thing to restrain it and occupy it within. Now the truths of salvation check this disposition of the mind to wander out of itself; and afford it matter for reflection; but in order to that, those truths must be present to the mind and the mind must have a relish for them. For this reason, the only object proposed in giving to the public

these Reflections in a form not hitherto adopted, is to recall man to himself, to his duties, to his sovereign good, who is God himself. By the word *Reflections* are not to be understood mere observations of the mind and fruitless speculations: that word is intended to point out whatever knowledge and whatever illustration the pondering on divine truths may produce in the mind, and the impressions made upon the will in reference to salvation.

Still, although man can display the truth before the eyes of the mind, and describe it in strong and moving expressions, yet it is the effect of divine grace, to produce Christian Reflections upon viewing this same truth. We are not competent according to the Apostle to think any thing of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God. (2 Cor. 3. 5.) He is the



le and the source of every good
it; and it is by reading and meditat
pon the Holy Scripture and books of
, and by diligent prayer, that this
e is to be obtained of him.
ruth is the nourishment of the soul; it
its strength, its light, its consolation, as
ten as it is read with a sincere desire of
rofiting by it, and its maxims are dwelt
pon with due application and attention
In all the different necessities of the sou
truth is a general relief. But if the so
omit to nourish herself therewith, she g
dually grows languid; not otherwise t
as a body which takes not nourishm
she falls into lukewarmness; she fo
the things of Heaven; wandering sti
ther and farther astray, she feels an
nation for the attractions of sens
exposes herself willingly to the tem

of her enemies, and at length draws upon herself a miserable destruction. Now in order to prevent so great a misfortune, nothing is more effectual than daily to have recourse to pious reading; and although it were no more than a few verses of the Holy Gospel, when there is not leisure for longer perusal, great helps would be obtained, provided all be considered as in a glass, and the truths so read be applied as so many salutary remedies to the evils of the soul.

A single sentence of the Holy Scripture produces frequently great changes in the mind. St. Antony needed not any thing more to lead him into a solitary desert, and there to consecrate himself to God. We know how St. Austin was converted in an instant by reading a line of St. Paul's Epistles. In prayer we discourse with

God; and when our prayer is as it ought to be, he fails not to hear us. God himself discourses with us, when we read the Holy Scriptures; and whenever he is willing to speak to our hearts efficaciously, he works in us great things. But when we read we must listen to him who speaks, and listen to him with profound attention and with respect, reflecting within ourselves, and desiring sincerely to do what he requires of us; for such is the way to make our reading profitable. But above all things we must ask of God to enable us to understand and to love the truths which he teaches us, and to grant us his grace to execute his good will and pleasure, which whoever seeks with earnestness and with docility, will never fail to discover in the perusal of his Holy Word.

The following Reflections are taken from the Holy Scripture and the writings of the Fathers of the Church; and by God's help they may produce in us the same effect as the inspired writings, if read with the same disposition of mind.

Before reading, the following prayer, or some other of the like kind, may be said:

Prayer.

Grant, O Lord, that in reading thy word, I may hear that voice which speaks to the heart; grant that I may attend to it with faith, that I may therein find myself reflected as in a mirror; not to forget myself as soon as seen, but to correct with all diligence and seriousness, the faults which the perusal of it shall point out to me in my conduct. Grant that I may feed so

plentifully on this divine nourishme
to deserve one day to be replenishe
it; that I may taste therein that
which thou keepest hidden for food c
who fear thee, and which thou im
not to those souls whose taste ca
relish the things of the earth. Gra
Lord, that by this holy reading I m
myself inspired with that charity, by
alone we can obtain entrance into th
tuary of truth; by which being taught
truth, we may ever follow it with
ceasing and unalterable fidelity. An

Christian
REFLECTIONS
FOR
EVERY DAY IN THE MONTH.

First Day.

ON FAITH.

1.—FAITH is so essentially necessary to salvation, that we are assured by the Apostle, that without it we cannot please God. It was by the ill use which man made of his reason that he brought upon himself his ruin; and to rescue himself from that ruin, God requires that he bend in all humility to the mysteries of Faith. This great gift of heaven consists in believing what neither our eyes can behold, nor our reason comprehend: and this without any other motive, than because

the unerring word of God himself has taugh it. He has taught us the mysteries o Religion and the truths of Salvation by th ministry of Jesus Christ his son, whom h delivered to us to be our teacher, and t whose voice we are bound to listen; fo his words are the words of eternal life From his word alone do we receive what ever either by scripture or by tradition w are required to believe. This his Apostle taught to his faithful followers, and lef their instructions a sacred deposit in th Church. The same is proposed to us b the Church, without addition or diminution to the fidelity of whose expositions we ar indebted for our instructions.

But it is not only the mysteries of faitl that God has revealed to us. He ha moreover prescribed laws and rules of con duct, which all must observe who will liv aright. Rules, which are so many grea truths, and which we are bound to believ

without any mixture of doubt; and by which our lives and our manners must be regulated, if we seek to secure our salvation. In a word, we must believe whatever God teaches by the ministers of his Church; we must do whatever he commands; we must avoid whatever he forbids; and we must lead a life conformable to our faith. What can be more just or more reasonable? Can any one refuse to obey a God who is truth, wisdom and goodness itself?

What a happiness to have for our teacher a God instructing us from his own mouth? Let us then be docile as children, and let us submit to be guided. Is it fitting that we hesitate to believe or refuse to perform that which a God man has taught us, and which he himself has performed? which millions of martyrs before us have believed and practised, and then sealed that belief and that practice with their blood? after them for us to doubt or be ashamed, would

he to want our senses! If we attribut
credit to the word only of a prudent man
how much more ought we not to subjec
our feeble reason to the authority of Go
himself!

By Faith we ought to be entirely con
vinced of the truth of things eternal, since
although we can neither see them nor un
derstand them, we have the assurance o
God himself to supply our deficiency. B
it we ought like Moses (Heb. 11.) to bea
the trials and temptations of this life firm
and unmoved, as if we distinctly saw, whom
indeed the eyes of our body cannot see. B
it we ought to represent to ourselves as pre
sent the good things we look forward to i
another life: that being inspired with a holy
ardour, we may by the exactness and regu
larity of all our actions, seek to insure t
ourselves the possession of them with unre
bating eagerness.

2.—Look for a moment at the admirable faith of Abraham, that Father of all the Faithful, as he is called in the Scripture. (Heb. 11.) In order to obey God he abandons every thing. At once he sets off for a distant country, without knowing where he is going; there he remains a stranger, and dwells in huts with Isaac and Jacob; ready at all times to depart at the least sign or notice of his God. And this because he looked forward to that city built upon a firm foundation, of which God is both the founder and architect, that is, his native Heaven; the sight of which caused him to view this whole world as an exile and a prison. He never ceased to hope, even under circumstances the most unpromising; for in his faith he felt himself ever strong: trusting to the promises of God, in nothing staggered; on the contrary, he fortified himself more and more, with confidence in his word, well knowing that he was fully able to

execute whatever he promised: thus rendering to God the glory due to him by abandoning himself in all things to his direction.

And thus did his faith obtain for him the reward of justice, and draw down upon him abundance of graces and heavenly blessings: and our reward and happiness will be the same, if we be truly children of Abraham, and like him abide in faith and in fidelity to our God. He was so faithful as to be willing to immolate Isaac, his only son, the sole heir of God's promises: and he would indeed have immolated him, had not a second order from heaven arrested his hand at the moment when it was raised up to execute the first. Like him let us unite our actions to our faith; and by sacrificing in all things our Isaac, that is, whatever we hold most dear and precious, to God; let us renounce ourselves and every thing that may obstruct us in obeying and follow-

ing him; for not otherwise than *as the body remains dead when deprived of the soul, so faith is also dead, when unaccompanied by good works,* (St. James, 2. 26.) Not all who believe in God, and cry Lord, Lord! will on that account enter into the kingdom of heaven, (St. Matt. 7. 21.) His will must be executed, and our lives be rendered conformable to his divine laws. Without this there is no salvation. You believe there is a God, you believe all the mysteries he has revealed: the devils also believe, and tremble too because they believe. Boast not then of a faith which is so languid: it will only serve to convict you as inexcusable, and consequently render you more criminal. The true test of our knowledge of God, and belief in him, is the keeping of his commandments, (1. John, 2.)

3.—Another great example is afforded us in the person of Moses, that great lawgiver

of the people of God. It was through faith, saith the Apostle, (Heb. 11.) that he was led to decline the honour of being reputed the son of King Pharoah's daughter; preferring afflictions with God's chosen people to the short-lived pleasures of a state of sin, and considering the ignominy and the cross of Jesus to be a greater treasure than all the riches of Egypt; because he kept in view the rewards of heaven, the only object of his desires. Are we thus influenced by our faith? Do we believe as Moses believed? Is it our faith that guides our speech, that determines our actions?

If we be truly possessed of faith, the whole duration of the crosses and afflictions of this life will appear to us no other than a short and transient moment, which will not fail to procure to us an eternal weight of incomparable glory. If we truly have faith, visible objects will no longer attract our attention; the goods and evils of this

to will little interest us, they will appear
ss away like a shadow, and our atten-
on will be engrossed with things invisible
nd eternal; with the goods and evils which
ill never end; and in comparison of which,
hatever is most terrible or most splendid
this world is no more than a mere no-
hing. It was in this ardour of faith that
e wise man cried out, Vanity of vanities
ll is vanity, (Eccl. 1.) There is nothing
bstantial in this world, nothing lasting,
t to love God, and him alone to serve
ith fidelity ever constant.

How powerful are the effects of faith,
d how terrible it is to see so little of those
fects in the lives of the greatest part of
ristians. *It is by faith in Jesus Christ,*
ys St. Paul, *that we are children of God,*
al. 3.); *the grace of our sanctification is*
ived to us through the means of faith,
ph. 2.) It is faith that opens our hearts
grace, and it is by faith that we obtain

tifully supply in you what is defe
Say often, I believe, Lord, help my unl
(Mark 9.) *Lord, increase my*
(Luke 17.)

My just man liveth by faith, sait
Lord, but if he withdraw himself an
off he shall not please my soul. (Heb

Shew me thy faith which is without w
as for me, I will shew thee my fai
works. (St. James, 2.)

What can it profit a man to be a ca
in belief, if he lead the life of a pagan
Peter Damien.)

Second Day.

ON THE END OF MAN.

1. MAN having received from God the faculty of reason, by which he is distinguished from other creatures, nature directs that he follow it in the whole of his conduct. Now whatever is done conformable to reason, is done for some end which we propose to obtain for ourselves by those means which are proper to procure it. This end is the object to which necessarily tend and on which necessarily are fixed all the desires of the heart; wherein its happiness is placed; and without which it cannot find content. As God is the first principle and the author of our existence and of all that is good in us, he doubtless ought to be our ultimate end; and whatever is in us ought to be directed to that end, as the point of

its destination. It is in him that we are to seek the accomplishment of all our desires and of all our hopes; and when we are so happy as to arrive at him, we must repose there as in our centre.

God is a being infinite and sovereignly amiable; and for him we were made. If he has endowed us with a mind, it is that we may know him; a will, that we may love him; a body that we may serve him. All our knowledge, our thoughts, our affections our movements, our actions, our plans, al are to tend to this point; all have a referenc to him; all contribute to advance us near and nearer to him: nothing ought to conte us short of him, nothing extend our desi beyond him. In him all our inquietud all our apprehensions, all our desires, labours, our miseries must terminate. alone is the source of our life; in him al can be beheld that ineffable light w enlightens the minds of man; in hin

are inebriated with abundance of good things; in him we are filled with that torrent of delights which eye has never seen, which ear has never heard, which the heart has never understood, and which God reserves for those who love him. We must be blind indeed if we seek elsewhere than in God, what can be found in God alone; if we permit our desires and our hopes to be directed to any other object whatever; if we imagine that any thing else will be able to fill up the void of our soul, we must be blind indeed. Nevertheless nothing is more common than this; and since man's reason has been darkened, and his inclinations corrupted, the greatest part of mankind seek their happiness, their pleasure and their repose in created things, without seeking to rise to the creator.

2.—It was for thyself that thou createdst us, O Lord, said St. Austin, (1 B. of

Conf. c. 1) and our hearts will never be free from troubles and agitations until they find their rest in thee. Since therefore man was created for no other purpose than for his God, to him he is indispensibly bound to refer all his thoughts, all his desires, his actions and sufferings: to him ought to be directed every end proposed, in him be sought the accomplishment of every wish. To honour him, to do his will and to please him ought to be man's sole intention: for according to St. Austin (B. 4. against Jul. c. 3) the good that a man does ceases to be a good from the moment when God ceases to be the end of his doing it: whether that end be some temporal advantage, to please some creature, and thence to derive some profit; whether it be his own glory, or his own pleasure. Whatever man has, from God he has it, from him it came; to him also all ought to return; for him all to be done.

We are the field of God's cultivation, we re the house of God's erection: (1 Cor. 3.) *e are trees planted by the hands of our lestial parent.* (Matth. 13. 32.) This ouse ought to serve to no other uses than those to which he has destined it. The hole produce of this field and these trees elongs to him, nor must he be robbed of he smallest part. When we do what is ight, it is his impulse that gives the motion, nd that motion must again bring us to here we set out. If thy eye is simple, ays Jesus Christ, thy whole body will be ight. (Matth. 6. 22.) This eye of ours, as t. Austin explains it, (B. 2. Serm. of the ord on the Mount, c. 13.) is the intention r which any action is undertaken: if this ntention be pure, if the sole object of its gard be God and his good pleasure, hatever is its work will be a work of light, nd grateful in his eyes. Even the actions f the animal part of us, those which are

wholly done for the body, become by means of such intention, virtuous and holy. *Whether you eat,* says St. Paul (1 Cor. 10. 31.), *or whether you drink, whatever you do in word or in deed, do all for the glory of God, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,* (Coll. 3. 17.) *Do all in the spirit of Christ: let your sentiments and dispositions be like unto his.*

3.—According to St. Austin and St. Thomas, a man is indispensibly bound, and is by precept commanded to refer, at least in the disposition of his heart all his thoughts and desires, his words and actions, to God: because every man is the work of God, and on God he depends for every thing he possesses. Is not every service which a slave can render, his master's due? And there is no one of mankind who does not depend more absolutely on God, and who is not infinitely more his property

than any slave can be the property of man. There is then no one but owes his whole self and service to God. And does a truth so evident stand in need of any proof? To doubt of it, it would be necessary to forget the relation in which God exists with regard to man, and man to God.

This truth is so engraved in our very hearts, that some of the philosophers among the heathens have been led to the acknowledgement of it, by the light of reason alone. According to these, to be a philosopher is to love God, and the first duty of a reasonable man is to have God always in his sight, and to have him in his heart as the object of his affections and the aim of his actions. For according to these same philosophers, God is a man's sovereign good; and in this quality to him he owes every thing. (St. Austin, B. 8 of the Kingd. of H. c. 8.)

All mankind are bound to love God, and to love him in a sovereign manner and above all things; for it is he alone who is to be their everlasting good. On which account the obligation of referring to him all our actions is included in the commandment of loving him, as St. Thomas observes; and unless we so refer them, we cannot keep that commandment: for the sole tendency of love is to seek to be united to its object, to hold that object in view in every action, and by that object to be actuated in every undertaking. If then we are obliged to love God with our whole hearts, we are equally obliged to turn towards him all the desires of our hearts; to direct all our motions to him, and all our actions; and him alone to regard in all our plans and all our projects. We ought not therefore to begin any thing but for him, nor to have any other aim in any thing that we do, but to advance towards him. If there be any

one to whom these truths are not evident, of him it is much to be feared, that his light is no other than darkness.

Love God, saith St. Austin, *and perform whatever this love inspires you to do. Whether you be silent or whether you speak; whether you punish or whether you pardon, let it be the love of God that determines you. Nourish charity in your heart: from that root nothing but what is good will spring. As charity keeps God ever in view, it will lay before him all you do and all you say.*

Where your treasure is, there also will be your heart, (St. Matt. 6. 21.) God is the treasure of him who loves, and by the heart our actions are prompted.

There is but one God; he who made us for himself, (1 Cor. 8. 6.)

He who made you whatever you are, has a right to insist upon your remaining his. (St. Austin.)

Third Day.

ON DEATH.

1.—DEATH is the separation of a body and a soul, which God originally so united together, as never to have to be separated. There is in man a strong desire always to continue in life, and not at all to be obliged to quit his body: nevertheless this separation necessarily takes place. It is the cause of much dread, much trouble, and many pains to him; for indeed it is contrary to his nature, being the penalty of sin. For sin this separation owes the necessity of existence in the world. Had man not sinned, his soul would not have been despoiled of its body: on the contrary, it would have been invested over and above with glory and a happy immortality. But however he has transgressed, it is just

his soul be torn away by violence from its habitation of earth, that it may be placed before the tribunal of its maker, and there receive its judgement: and that the body, a mass of corruption, return to the earth, become food for worms, and be reduced to dust. Nothing can be more humiliating to man's pride; but it is the decree of the Sovereign judge. There is no appeal.

The only consolation in an evil thus inevitable is, that although death is a punishment to the children of Adam, it is rendered nevertheless, through the death of Christ, an excellent remedy against the greatest of all our evils, which is sin; and becomes a sacrifice, which we are able to offer to God, as members of his son; thereby imitating the sacrifice which he made of his own life for us on the cross. His death hath sanctified our death; but to that end, we must enter into his plan; we must accept of it in his spirit, and suffer like he

suffered with humility, with patience, with submission to the orders of our heavenly parent. We must be ready at every moment to give our lives for his sake rather than offend him. It is infinitely preferable to be separated from our body for a time, than to expose ourselves to be eternally separated from Jesus Christ, our chief, our life and our salvation.

Death appeared to the greatest philosophers as the most terrible of all evils, because they had no resource in the hopes of eternity; but the Christian, who finds in Jesus Christ every means of escaping eternal destruction and of acquiring heaven, regards it as a good. Death, according to an ancient father, notwithstanding all that it carries with it of terrible, is no longer any thing to a Christian more than a mere trifle, it is now divested of all that is dreadful.

Those persons may tremble at the approach of death, who in the possession of Christianity live like pagans: to those it may appear to be dreadful, whose minds are little occupied with the hopes of the good things to come. On the other hand, let those be full of confidence, who live in the expectation of their Lord's coming. It is unavoidable; the hour is uncertain; when it comes there will be no more time; no retracing of our steps. Man dies but once; death comes by surprise; let us then be ready; that when the Lord shall knock at the door, we may open it to him forthwith.

Almighty God knocks by sending sickness: by reducing us to the danger of dying. St. Gregory.) We open the door to him, when we submit to his ordinances with good will, when we put our affairs in order, when we prepare ourselves without dilatoriness to receive the sacraments; when we offer him our sickness and our death as a sacrifice

of homage and acknowledgment for his life, and as a thanksgiving for his graces as a satisfaction due to his justice, and a means of conciliating his mercy.

2.—*Happy the dead who die in the Lord*, says the Scripture: but what are we to do in order to have part in this beatitude? We must not omit to consider that death is not only the separation of body and soul, but it is moreover a separation from all created things. We do not then prepare for death as we ought unless we estrange ourselves and separate ourselves during this life, and as promptly as possible from all those things, of which death without waiting for our consent will deprive us, and this for the sake of attaching ourselves to God, and of living for him alone. Whatever we are passionately fond of, the same must we abandon and despise for Jesus Christ. This privation must be so

entire, as to reach to a renunciation of our ownselves, and to make us die to ourselves, since any thing short of that will not be to renounce the objects of our passion as we ought.

When we have arrived at this state of mind, it will cost us nothing to have to quit our body; death will no longer have any power to dismay. The obligation of making satisfaction to the justice of him who has condemned us to death, (Gen. 2.); the quality of travellers, of exiles, of strangers in this world; the continual repugnance we feel in ourselves to the law of God during the whole time of this life; the destruction of sin and of concupiscence which death will effect; our entrance upon our eternal inheritance, that happy transition from time to eternity; all this will make death desirable to the true servants of God: all this makes them lament that the effect of their adoption through Jesus Christ, which will take place in their being deliver-

ed from their bodies, is so long delayed This disposition of mind is of obligation and to be without all desire of being united to Jesus Christ by death is a criminal disposition, and is a convincing proof that we place our satifaction in created things whereas we are under the obligation of longing for Jesus in this life, if we desire to possess him after death. *He who loves not*, says St. John, *remains in death*; and he, says St. Austin, who grieves not here below as an exile, will not have to rejoice in the other world as a citizen of heaven. To be without the desire of going to God and to feel no regret at being as a stranger upon earth, is to be without all love of God. Since, therefore we are not to go to God nor arrive at our true country, but through death; not to prepare ourselves to die well not to desire to quit this life, is not to wish to go to God, nor to enter into possession of our true country.

3. Let us die here with Christ, if we wish to live with him in heaven. Let us from this present time die to the life of this world, and of her own criminal passions; let us die to the love of creatures, and of ourselves; it is the only way to live for him, of whom we hold our life, and to whom we ought entirely to consecrate it. Jesus Christ began not to live a renewed and a glorious life, till after he had made a sacrifice to his Eternal Father of the life that was mortal. Let us not pretend any more than he to live the life of the spirit, without renouncing the life of the flesh, and of sin, which brings death.

4. Let us then so live, that, at the last day of our life, we may be able to die like him, in his spirit, and in the same dispositions. Our death cannot be like unto his, and indeed it cannot be otherwise than very evil, unless he be willing to unite it to his own. This favour is what each one must seek to

obtain by every effort, by continual prayer, by leading a life conformable to that of Jesus Christ when he was on earth, and to the rules of the gospel; a life of disengagement, of poverty, of humility, of purity, of charity, of patience.

Each moment of life was for him a commencement of death; his death never ceased to be present to his mind; at every moment he was resigned to it by habitual submission to the orders of his Father. He failed not to offer himself a willing victim, and was ever eager to accomplish the sacrifice; for he regarded it as a baptism wherein he was to wash our souls, the baptism of his own blood, which, in conformity with the will of his Father, he was to shed to the last drop, that he might redeem us as his inheritance at that great price: that he might render thereby the sovereign homage which we owe to his Father for our lives: and that he might

efface sin, by which we had dishonoured him, in defiling within us that own image of himself, to which he had formed us.

Let us imitate him in our lives, and we shall then be like to him in death; let us employ the whole time of life in learning to die well; let us never lose sight of that last moment; let us unite ourselves to Jesus Christ dying on the cross; let us be ever ready to receive the blow of death; let us offer it continually to our heavenly Father in union with that of his son; let us desire the accomplishment of our sacrifice in order to be reunited with Jesus Christ, as members with their head, and live with him a life immortal.

How can death have terrors for a soul which lives by faith? which knows that our Saviour by his own death conquered the evil of death, and changed it into a sacrifice acceptable to his Father? We ought then to desire this sacrifice, that

thereby we may enter into his glo
for the accomplishment of that, the
recommends to us three things: '
ance, that we use this world as if
it not: Justice, that we render t
neighbour his own; Piety, that w
ourselves to God by love, and live
him and for him.

*Do all your actions in such man
you were to die as soon as you had
them. Remember your last end
shall never sin.* (Eccl. 7.)

The death of the just is precio
sight of God. (Ps. 115.) Let me,
die the death of the just, and let
end be like unto theirs. (Number

The death of sinners is very evil,
for generally an evil life can only
lowed by an evil death.

Fourth Day.

ON JUDGEMENT.

1.—ALMIGHTY God counts all our steps; he considers all our motions, our hearts, our actions, and our plans, and at the same moment passes judgement upon them. He has his eyes open at all times upon the good and the bad, and he instantly makes the discrimination. The decision of his judgement will, at the last moment of our life, be made manifest to us. Then each one will appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, and will know his doom for all eternity. Then it is that he will discover to us the most secret thoughts of our hearts; and that each one will receive commendation or confusion according to his merits. That will be the particular judgement.

The general judgement will take place at the end of the world. Both this and the particular judgement will leave us without any appeal; both will be unalterable; the sentence which will be passed upon every individual of mankind at his death, will be the same as that at the last day. The former will be between God and the soul which shall appear before him; the latter will take place in public, in the face of heaven, earth and hell; all in general, angels, men, devils, will then be placed before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge. The Lord will expose to light whatever shall have been most hidden and secret, whatever is now done in darkness; the great book will be opened; the consciences of all will appear naked to the sight of all mankind, and nothing will escape the knowledge and severity of the judge. Then will be the time when each one will receive the reward due to his good or evil deeds.

There is nothing to be more dreaded by the bad Christian than to fall into the hands of the living God; on the contrary, to those who shall have followed Jesus Christ with fidelity and uniform perseverence, there will be nothing more consoling.

2.—It is God's will that this last day be always present to the eyes of our faith. It is very necessary, in order that we may keep ourselves upon our guard, by salutary fear, by watchfulness and humility: and the way to avoid being judged then without mercy, is, for each one to examine himself repeatedly and prove himself; to put his accounts in order; to judge himself with all rigour; and so to pass each day of his life, as if in the evening he would have to appear at the tribunal of Jesus Christ.

Watch and pray at all times, says Jesus Christ, (Luke 21.) *lest that day come upon you unawares;* and that you may be ren-

dered worthy to escape the evils which will fall upon sinners. Of course those who do not watch; who neglect prayer; who think little on the last judgement of the Almighty; will not escape being surprised by it. It is by such negligence and unconcern, that man renders himself unworthy of the graces and mercies of his Sovereign Judge, and so deserves to be overwhelmed at the last day with the whole weight of his vengeance.

On that great day every man will have to render an account of all his thoughts, words and actions; of all the evil he shall have done; of all the good he ought to have done, but shall have omitted to do; nay, of the manner in which he shall have performed those of his actions which were good; of all the favours received, whether temporal or spiritual; of the use made of inspirations and graces; of riches and poverty; of health and sickness; of adver-

sity and prosperity; of humiliation and of exaltation; in a word, of every thing.

From the hand of God proceeds good and evil fortune; it is his intention that we use the one and the other according to his ordination; that we enter into his views; that we make every thing contribute to his glory, and our own salvation. It will all be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary; all will be brought to scrutiny; and the more each one shall have received, the more will be demanded of him. To the weak will be shewn mercy, says the Holy Scripture; but as to the powerful, those who are in great employments, in high stations, they will be judged with rigour.

8.—These great truths ought to be the subject of our ordinary meditations; and the church considers the last judgement to be so necessary a subject of reflection to

her children, that she thinks it a duty t
remind them of it from time to time in he
divine office and liturgy. This she doe
at the beginning of Advent, to prepare then
to receive Jesus Christ upon his being bor
in the world by his incarnation, and i
the heart of man by his graces: at th
beginning of Lent, to dispose them t
honour Jesus Christ in his sufferings, hi
death and resurrection, and by penance t
bear a part in that death and those suffer
ings, that they may partake of the grace
of his renewed life: and at the end of th
Ecclesiastical year, to impress upon the
children that it is in judgement that th
life of man and the world at large mus
terminate.

Wherefore faith in God's judgement ought to bring about the beginning of ou conversion, to forward it in progress an effect its completion. By it all our action ought to be animated. From the momen

those judgements are lost sight of, man wanders astray and loses sight of himself. The Royal Prophet says, (Ps. 17.) that *he never cast off God's law, because his judgements were ever present to him;* and on the other hand, that *the ways of the sinner are always defiled, because God's judgements have vanished from his eyes,* (Ps. 9.) Without penance the life of man is only sin; without it there is no salvation: now, without God's judgements being present to us, no penance would be done; and as our penance ought to be continual, so ought also to be the remembrance of God's judgements.

Alas! who shall be able to sustain the presence of that dreadful judge? Scarcely, according to the Scripture, shall the just be saved: what then must not the sinner have to fear, who thinks so little on that assize? Come you, the blessed of my Father! the Sovereign Judge will say! but

who can assure himself that he will b
the number of those whom the Father
blessed? Go from me, you cursed!
will say to the reprobate! and who
not fear to be of this unhappy nun
since even St. Paul himself feared les
should be of that number.

At the same moment that the sent
shall be pronounced, one company
depart to everlasting punishment, the o
will enter into possession of life ete
Dreadful separation! But so must te
nate the life of every one of us. Tim
allotted us for no other purpose tha
enable us to insure to ourselves, by
good deeds, this happiness thus promi
and to avoid this threatened misery.

At that period will commence ju
and vengeance. The present time is
season for mercy and salvation. Le
pray that God would give us grace t
penance during this life, if we desir

a favourable sentence at our entrance
the next. Let us exercise ourselves
deeds of charity, that we may receive its
ards: let us in this life shew mercy,
then mercy may be shewn to us. Let
earnestly endeavour to store with good
ks the days which yet remain to us,
throughout eternity we may be filled
h the good things of the house of our
. (St. Aug.)

*Saint Jerome imagined to himself, that
heard at every moment those terrible
rds: Arise, ye dead, and come to judge-
nt! So ought we to occupy ourselves
the remembrance and fear of God's
gement.*

Pierce, O Lord, my flesh; pierce it with
fear, said the prophet, for I am afraid
thy judgements, (Ps. 118.)

It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands
the living God, (Heb. 10.)

Woe, saith St. Austin, woe even to him whose life is the least reprehensible; if thou, O Lord, in the investigation of his deeds, proceed without mercy.

Fifth Day.

ON HELL.

1.—HELL is a prison, dark and horrible wherein the divine justice will cause th wicked to suffer eternally the punishme due to their crimes. It is an abyss *in which God has precipitated for ever t angels who sinned* (2 Pet. 2. and Jude v. and into which he will precipitate all th

of mankind who imitate them in their disobedience: darkness will there supply the place of chains; there, shut out from every irradiation of truth, they will be separated from God and from the elect by an everlasting excommunication.

It is a land wherein is nothing but misery and darkness, (Job. 10.) where sin, death and despair hold their reign; where neither order nor peace, nor joy, nor consolation has place; but in their stead every sort of confusion and disorder; eternal horror; implacable hatred on the part of God towards these miserable wretches; and on their part a like hatred for him, for his justice, his power, his truth.

Mortal enemies of each other and of themselves; without union, without charity, without equity, these unfortunate beings are in a continual revolt, and at perpetual war with their own souls and with all their companions in punishment: the wife against

her husband, the husband against his wife; the son against his father, and the father against his son; brother also against brother; superiors against inferiors, and inferiors against superiors.

Stripped of every good, overwhelmed with every evil, suffering torments unceasingly, and urged eternally by impatience, fury and rage, they vomit forth a thousand blasphemies against the avenger of their crimes, and against all who enjoy the happiness of his presence. These furious ones would be glad to tear themselves to pieces, to destroy themselves, to annihilate themselves. They entertain a continual spite against all the rest of the reprobate, but in a particular manner against those who from having been to them an occasion of sin and of scandal have been the cause of their ruin: against all creatures which have in any way been the objects of their lusts and the instruments

of their sins: and while they continue to entertain for them a passion the most unrestrained, they at the same time despair of ever being able to gratify it. The vehemency of this concupiscence is so great that they are tortured by the inability to satisfy it; and they are tortured also with an inconceivable horror of the same concupiscence, because their insatiable desires constitute a part of their punishment. Agitated at the same moment by violent and contrary appetites, they hate themselves and love themselves without rule or order, without end or measure: without being able to procure any intermission or abatement to this terrible madness of desire. Every moment they call upon death to come to their relief, and death comes not. They live in spite of themselves, and will live eternally in the midst of the horrors of a death which day and night torments them and yet does not consume them.

Tears and gnashing of teeth denote (Mark 9.) the worm that gnaws the science dies not; the fire, notwithstand it continually burneth, diminishes neither will it be extinguished. It is fire, according to the Evangelist, like salt, which penetrating the reprobate every part, renders them incorruptil that ceasing not to live, they may not cease to suffer.

2.—Such will be the lot of those live on the earth as if they never were die; and who die before they have thought upon that tremendous acco which they will one day have to render him who holds in his hands the fates of men, and who renders to every one acco ing to his works. Jesus Christ will say them in his anger, *"Go from me, ye curse go into everlasting fire which has been pared for the devil and his angels,"* (Ma

25.); and at the same moment they will be precipitated into the eternal abyss, without hope of ever being able to escape.

These dreadful words include two sorts of pains which the reprobate suffer in hell: the pain of condemnation, and the pain of sense. The pain of condemnation consists in the privation of the sight of God, and eternal separation from him, whose anger will overwhelm them like a mountain, and will make them feel all the might of his vengeance. They will ever have him for their enemy, and they will ever be his enemy. There will no longer be place for reconciliation, nor for grace, nor mercy. To be eternally the objects of his hatred and his fury, will be their only portion; this will be the essence of their damnation. God is a man's sovereign good; he alone can make him happy. Out of God neither good, nor pleasure, nor honour, nor glory, can be had: out of him there is nothing

but evil without alloy, misery and des
Such is the purport of those words: "
ye cursed, from me."

The pain of sense includes whatever
souls of the reprobate will suffer from
terrible impressions which the fire
make upon their bodies; from the extr
liveliness of their feelings; from the di
ent organs of perception, which will
longer be affected by any other objects
those of anguish insupportable; from
tearing and stretching of all the fibre
the body, the most susceptible of tort
from sufferings the most exquisite
most violent which they will endur
every part of their body, both within
without; from the terrific phantoms w
will be continually present to their imag
tion; from endless thoughts full of des
and representing to their sight, with
ceasing, the present, the past, and
future.

In the past they will see the graces they have abused, the good they have neglected to do, the evil they have done; the salutary calls, the good examples, the opportunities and means of salvation which by their fault they have rendered useless. In the present they will behold the many punishments which the Creator, together with his creatures, will cause them unrelentingly to undergo; the odious prisons wherein they will be shut up and constrained by a hand, invisible indeed, but omnipotent and inflexible. In the future they will look forward to an unchangeableness of lot, an eternity of misery, which after thousands of millions of years and centuries, will be ever beginning anew, without leaving them any hope of being ever able to mollify their judge. This is what those words contain: "*Depart into everlasting fire.*"

Who must not shudder at the sight of so dismaying a picture? And yet here is

nothing exaggerated: they are truths which we learn from God himself: it is the idea of hell as the sacred writings of Scripture furnish it. His word will not fail: heaven and earth will perish before all these things will fail to come upon those who are unfortunate enough to live and die in sin. And yet, who is the person that reflects on this misery, and who uses means to avoid it?

3.—It is not by sins committed in a only that we fall into this misery; we ma draw it upon ourselves by the will alon by the desires and the dispositions of hearts; by the sins of our state and sit tion, when we live in an habitual opposi to the order of God and to his will: w we willingly remain in an evident da of our ruin, in a profession the choi which is nowise prompted by God; we embrace without vocation and motives purely human; and of whi

are not calculated to fulfil the necessary duties: when we remain ignorant of our obligations, or when acquainted with what our duty binds us to, we still neglect it: when presumptuous of our force, we pray not for the assistance of Divine grace, or pray little, or pray not as we ought.

Nay, frequently a man is damned for the only defect of that charity which he owes to God and to his neighbour (1 John 3. 16.): for *he who loves not remains in the death of sin.* Not to love God is to violate the greatest of all his commandments, and not to love our neighbour as ourselves is to violate the second. *To be possessed of the goods of this world, and to shut our hearts against those who are in need, is to be devoid both of the love of God and of our neighbour,* (St. John, ibid.); not to give alms, or not to give them in proportion to our means, is a sin that entails damnation.

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3.—It is not by sins committed in act only that we fall into this misery; we may draw it upon ourselves by the will alone; by the desires and the dispositions of our hearts; by the sins of our state and situation, when we live in an habitual opposition to the order of God and to his will: when we willingly remain in an evident danger of our ruin, in a profession the choice of which is nowise prompted by God; which we embrace without vocation and out of motives purely human; and of which we

t calculated to fulfil the necessary
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ty binds us to, we still neglect it:
presumptuous of our force, we pray
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both of the love of God and of
ighbour, (St. John, ibid.); not to
lms, or not to give them in pro-
to our means, is a sin that entails
tion.

And if Jesus Christ consigns to everlasting burnings the man who has refused to give him to eat when he was hungry, in the persons of the poor; the man who has refused the duties of charity, in the persons of little ones who believe in him (St. Matt. 25.), what are we to think of those who take away the property of others, or will make not restitution? And if those shall be condemned who suffer a person to die in body, through want, one who otherwise must die necessarily, how much more those, who suffer the souls of men to die in their sins, when they are bound in duty to render them assistance, or when by their situation they are able to do it.

Lukewarmness and presumption are the cause of damnation to numbers. Lukewarmness, because it induces people to neglect their duties and to disregard the precautions necessary to resist temptations, so that sooner or later they are seduced,

and quitting the narrow path they wander and go astray. Jesus Christ himself declares that he vomits the lukewarm out of his mouth. Presumption causes damnation; because flattering souls in a false peace, it leads them to hope that they will still do penance before their death; that God will shew them mercy whenever they desire it; or that they will be saved without penance, provided they succeed in making their confession: because it stifles the fear of God's judgements; because it leads people to undertake things above their strength and ability; and because, after having raised a man up, it casts him down headlong.

The only sure way is, for a person to labour out his salvation with fear and trembling, with distrust of himself, with humility, and with continual solicitude; to pass his life in labour and in penitence, that he may expiate past sins and secure

himself against future ones; to produce the fruits of all the good works for which occasion may be afforded, whatever difficulty it may cost; to render to God continued thanks for his forbearance in not having ordained him to die when he was in the state of sin, but in having reserved him for the time, when he looked for him to do penance, and when he meant to shew him mercy: a period known to himself, and dependant solely upon him, and not at all subject to man's choice.

What is there that a damned soul would not be willing to do and to suffer, if God would permit him to return to this world and expiate his sins? Nothing would appear painful to him; in like manner nothing will appear severe to us, if we but reflect well upon the state of the damned. Is it indeed possible that any one can complain of a moment of pain, when by it he is freed from an eternity of evils, and he

obtains an eternity of blessings? Let us dread the evils with which God threatens us: let us love the good things which he promises, and then the promises and menaces of the world, the goods and evils of this life, will no longer be looked upon by us with interest. Oh happy eternity of the Saints! Oh wretched eternity of the damned! Oh my God, without thy grace, I am not able to turn to my profit this present moment, upon which both the one and the other depends. That grace I ask for, in the name of Jesus Christ, that I may be able to love thee and enjoy thee eternally.

. . . . . .

Descend down into hell while yet alive, if you wish not to descend thither after death. Reflect frequently on the infinite number of souls, which are there burning, and which will burn eternally, on account of sins that are much less than yours.

Many are there for no more than one only mortal sin. Learn from this severity of God's justice to live in fear of him, and to live in horror of sin. Pray to your Saviour who is your judge, that he would please to chastise you in this life, and not to spare you, provided that he but spare you hereafter. (St. Austin.)

"Which of you, you who are given to "sensuality, which of you will be able to "dwell in the midst of that devouring "fire?" (Is. 33.)

For a moment of pleasure, an eternity of punishment! One may indeed say with a great Saint (St. Austin), that sinners at their death pass from one punishment to another; from the fire of concupiscence to the fire of hell.

Sixth Day.

ON PARADISE.

1.—PARADISE is a place in the highest heavens, where God assembles the whole of his elect, that he may give them a sight of himself face to face and without any obscurity; where he reveals his secrets and his mysteries; where he manifests his divinity; where he causes himself to be beloved with perfect and consummate love; where he gives himself to them to be enjoyed and possessed without the possibility of their ever losing him; where he pours upon them all his treasures and his riches; where he inebriates them with the abundance of the good things of his house; where he makes them to drink of the torrent of his delights, and crowns them with joy and

glory; where he makes them to reign with him and to triumph for ever over all his enemies.

There it is, that elevated above all other things, they contemplate the King of kings in all his glory. There it is that filled with that justice, in the desire of which, during their abode on earth, they were ever insatiable, they repose with perfect tranquility in the bosom of God himself; united intimately to Jesus Christ, they make with him one and the same spirit, one and the same church; a church perfectly pure, without spot or wrinkle; there he is all in all and in every one of them, without division, without separation, without reserve; he possesses them as an inheritance which he has acquired to himself by the shedding of his blood; there by his mediation they are all penetrated with God, and, as it were, absorbed in the abyss of his Divinity.

There, in all their motions, they retain a calm composure; their actions are reducible to one only one, which is to see God, and love him and praise him in transports of incomprehensible joy; neither do they experience fatigue in this their employment, for the more they know him, the more do they find him worthy of their love; and the more they love him, the greater delight do they experience in praising and adoring him, and in more and more attaching themselves to him. All their desires are fulfilled; in this one object is centred their every wish. The whole capacity of their souls is filled with God, because being infinite in the immensity of his existence and in his perfections, he furnishes them in himself with a full plenitude of every thing that can be desirable. He is their light, their life, their good, their joy, their happiness. In him they discover in wonderful abundance what they were never

able to find in all other things unite
And they would not be willing to pa
with one drop of this torrent of delig
for all the riches and all the kingdoms
this world.

With a perfect submission to his goo
pleasure in all things, they have no wis
but what is his wish; they have no wis
but for himself. The whole world appea
no other to them than as a mere speck i
comparison with the value of this the
heavenly inheritance with these unspeak
able riches, which they enjoy withot
interruption and without fear of ever bein
despoiled of them. They have no oth
occupation but to admire, to love, t
render continual thanksgivings, to giv
glory to their Creator and to their Redeem
for all the good conferred upon them, an
for all their attainments in holiness. The
place their crowns at his feet, in acknow
ledgement that he alone is the source

their holiness, that whatever they possess is from the fulness of his abundance: they acknowledge that of their own stock they possess nothing: they disclaim every pretension; to him they attribute the whole of their enjoyment.

In that place there is no more sin, no more concupiscence, no more weakness nor ignorance, no more enemies, no more combats. *God there wipes away all tears from their eyes,* (Apoc. 21.) Death exists not there; weeping, lamentations and afflictions are there unknown: hunger and thirst are not felt, nor does any heat of the sun incommode them any longer, for there all things are renewed. There it is that all the blessed have only one heart and one soul; that each one, being fully content with his own individual lot, knows no envy at the lot of others, for he is delighted with their happiness, and enjoys himself therein as much as if it were his own.

long upon the earth, (Ps. 119). St. P
ran towards it with so much ardour, t
he felt a strong desire to be delivered fi
the prison of his body, and be loose
from the fetters which held him bound,
order that he might be with Jesus Chris

He who is in love with his exile, v
does not lament over the miseries of
present life, loves not this heavenly coun
does not desire eternal life; and whoe
desires not eternal life, loves not G
Now to be without the love of God is
be dead: it is a guilty disposition t
debars all admittance into the kingdom
God: not to mention that he who has
desires of heaven is not led to prayer;
prayer has its origin in an unremitting
sire of heaven, and of the means of arriv
there. Now without prayer we arrive
at heaven. God gives to those only w
ask; he permits himself to be found
those only who seek; he opens only

ho knock; and it is only by the of the heart that all this is done in nner.

ur Lord ordains that we every day t his kingdom may be established; would destroy in us the reign of l of the passions, in order that he ay possess our hearts, and we may him also and him only. This can ce only in heaven; and we do not prayer as we ought, unless we are to quit this earth and this mortal t we may be advanced to heaven. heaven is a kingdom that suffers , and is not taken but by force; bating our passions, by denying s, by carrying our cross all the our life; by imitating the example who himself was constrained to order to enter into his glory. It nly that we can reach heaven. We

do not then desire it, if we are unwilling to do violence to ourselves, and to advance by the narrow path: for no one will be persuaded that a person is desirous of going to any place, if he refuse to take the road that leads to it. Can any thing be more rational than to submit to some privations and sufferings in order to a great acquisition and great recompense. If the prizefighters, in the athletic games, for a corruptible crown, and the children of the world for temporal advantages, expose themselves to so many dangers, and undertake so many and such painful enterprizes, who shall refuse to suffer for eternal rewards and an immortal crown? All the labours of this life put together, afflictions, sicknesses, persecutions; all that man can undergo, whether in the way of voluntary inflictions, or in the course of unavoidable disasters, nay death itself, what is the whole of all this when compared to that life

of everlasting happiness which will follow, and which will be the reward?

Pray to God that he will be pleased to enable you to break from the creatures you love, and that he will give you an earnest desire to possess him for a happy eternity, (Tim.) *Seek and desire with a holy eagerness the second coming of Jesus Christ, as the antient patriarchs and prophets desired the first,* (2 Pet. 3.)

Say with the holy king David "Jerusalem shall ever be the beginning of my joy." (Ps. 136.)

We already live in heaven like citizens thereof. Let your conversation be in that happy country, and let your heart be turned thither without ceasing, (Phil. 3.) There ought to be your treasure and sovereign felicity.

O my God, when thy glory shall appear my heart will have its fill.

Seventh Day.

OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN ALL WE DO.

1.—TO have God present to us in a
we do; to proceed at every step in hi
sight, as under his very eye, and under hi
hand; to fear that eye which beholds ever
thing and which is seen by nobody; whic
pierces the thickest darkness and penetrate
the most secret thoughts; to have no othe
desire but to please him in all things; t
keep the eyes of our faith attentive upo
his law, his good pleasure and his order
in fine, to think, to act, to suffer, to pra
to speak as if we had him before us;—th
is one of the principal duties of a Christian
this was the devotion of the antient pa
triachs, prophets and holy kings of th
people of God. It was he himself wh

ve to Abraham the commandment to
lk in his presence, if he desired to attain
the perfection to which he called him,
en. 17.) Moses remained firm and con-
nt, fearless of the fury of Egypt's king,
cause he constantly felt the influence of
t supernatural vision with which he had
n favoured, the presence of the Invisible
the burning bush, (Heb. 11.) The holy
g. David informs us, that he had always
Lord present to his mind; and that he
sidered him as always at his right hand
order to save himself from staggering
. 15.); and in that he was the figure of
us Christ, to whom the passage refers
a spiritual sense. And in another place
s prophet says, that he gave not himself
to impiety, that he strayed not from
d, because all his judgements were
sent to his view, and that he lost not
ht of his laws, which were full of justice,
. 17.) Whereas the ways of the sinner

are at all times defiled, because he has not God before his eyes, (Ps. 13.) A certain Father of the Church (St. Greg. Maz.) says, that a Christian ought to think on God and on his holy truths, as often as he breathes, or rather that this ought to be his continued thought. And indeed it is certain, that it is the forgetfulness of God which causes us to sin.

This sense of God's presence consists not in merely believing that God is every where, and that he sees every thing, but it consists in an attention and application of the mind to God, to his law, to our duties; and in a constant tendency or leaning of our heart towards him. This application of the mind must be supported by a lively faith of the immensity of God and of his presence in our interior; a tendency which must be kept alive by frequent acts of the love of God, by ardent desires of pleasing him, of being wholly attached to him, by

ising all things else for the love of him.
e morning I will stand before thee, O
, says the Royal Prophet, and I will
ss that Thou art a God who neither
h nor suffereth iniquity.

—This exercise has for its object God
nt and working every where by his
r, by his wisdom, his goodness, his
y, his justice, and his other divine
ctions; and Jesus Christ his Son,
n we may represent sometimes as
ching, sometimes as performing mira-
or as praying, suffering, dying; or as
Master, our Saviour, our Mediator, our
Priest, the model of all our actions.
in Jesus Christ that God is for us;
in him that he saves us, that he aids
ith his all-powerful assistance; that
pports us against the attacks of our
ies. It is in him that he watches
our wants, that he fills us with the

riches of his grace. Consequently it is upon this author and finisher of our faith, that we are always to keep our eyes open and attentive, like the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters; because we are constantly in need of God, and because we cannot have access to God but through him: in fine, it is in the hands of this Divine Saviour that our life, our justice, our safety, our lot for all eternity is placed.

There is nothing more efficacious for advancing us in a Christian life, to preserve us from sin, and from the occasions which make us fall into sin: to advance our approach to God, and to unite ourselves to him more and more: neither does any thing more clearly evince the corruption of the greatest part of mankind, than the forgetfulness of God and Jesus Christ which almost every where prevails. Their temporal affairs, the objects of their passions possess their minds entirely from morning

to night, from their infancy to their death. Their thoughts, their desires, their actions are all dedicated to the world, to interest, to glory, to pleasure: and God appears to be almost wholly lost sight of. If at any time man's thoughts are directed to him, it is in the routine of method and custom; they are barren thoughts, producing nothing that may affect the conduct of life. Nor Jesus Christ, nor his gospel is any longer studied: nay, it is scarcely known. Alas! how shall man arrive at God, when the only way that leads to him, the truth which ought to be the guide to him, the life that practises the truth and follows its light, is forgotten?

3.—God complains by the mouth of one of his prophets that his people have done two evils: one, that they have abandoned him, the fountain of living waters: the other, that they have dug to themselves

oken cisterns which hold not water. We
bandon God when we forget him, when
e shut our eyes against his truth, and our
eart against the influence of his grace:
and we next make unsound cisterns, when
we give ourselves up to creatures and seek
in them a happiness which they are not
able to afford. They hold not water,
because opening the heart to sin, they
plunge it into a dissipation which causes
it to pour out the salutary moisture of grace
and piety.

On the contrary, the means to preserve
the faith of God's presence, and the atten
tion and vigilance which we owe to him is
1. To pray frequently to obtain this grac
for it is the work of God to render himse
present to our minds, to make himself f
in our hearts and to engrave upon them
sacred law. 2. To live recollected,
to keep diligent watch over ourselves.
is in the most retired interior of man

God delights to dwell, and there it is that man must withdraw himself, and by continual attention must remain if he desires to find him. 3. We must preserve our hearts pure and free from the corruption of sin. As dust in the eye prevents our seeing, so sin confounds our interior sight, and prevents attention to God. 4. We must adopt a high idea and a great esteem of God, of his goodness, of his justice, of his power, of his wisdom. We never willingly let our thoughts be occupied with any thing but what we consider worthy of our attention. 5. We must entertain a sincere love for him: we take not delight in thinking on any thing but what we love; and when we love any object much, our thoughts are occupied with it, in a manner, naturally, and without difficulty, and are not easily taken off. 6. It is dangerous to engage ourselves in occupations of great dissipation, unless the situation

in which providence has placed us require it. There is nothing by which the mind is more disturbed, and the application of it to God more impeded, than by a multitude of affairs and embarrassments; in which men engage without circumspection, and out of motives purely human. 7. A soul that is regular and exempt from, or that is master of its passions, and not obnoxious to surprise, whatever may happen, receives like a pure and quiet water with easy susceptibility the impressions made by God and the truths of salvation. *The wisdom of the doctor of the law cometh in his time of leisure,* saith the scripture, *and he that avoids hurry shall receive wisdom,* (Eccl. 38.) The Lord gave himself not to be found by Elias, neither in that impetuous storm which overturned the mountains, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire; he communicated himself to him only in the soft breeze of a gentle

air, (3 Kings 19.) to shew us thereby that he discovers himself to our minds not otherwise than in the heart's peace.

Be fully assured that God sees you, wherever you may be; and that all things are naked and open to his view, (Heb. 4.) *If you will sin, find out a place in which he does not see you, and in that place do what you seek to do.*

Watch before me and be perfect, saith the Lord, (Gen. 17.)

I had the Lord always present before me, (Ps. 15.)

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God, (Matt. 5.)

Eighth Day.

OF THE CARE WHICH MAN OUGHT TO HAVE OF HIS SALVATION.

1.—MAN was not created by God for any other end than that he might be happy; he cannot be happy but inasmuch as he is united to God, and he possesses God; because God alone is his light, his life and his sovereign good. He is not united to God, he does not possess God, but inasmuch as he knows him, inasmuch as he contemplates his infinite perfections; inasmuch as he loves him, sees him in spirit, and places in him his joy and his happiness: separated from God he finds in himself nothing but ignorance, nothing but darkness, corruption and misery. It is sin that separates him from this supreme good, that corrupts him, that destroys him, that

him [illegible]; because turning
n God and effacing the impressions
ve in his heart, it turns his affec-
id his inclinations towards himself
vards creatures, that he may find
able pleasure and may indemnify
in some sort for the happiness he
njoyed in his Creator. This false
e which he finds in himself and in
ects of his passions, seduces and
s him, to use the expression of the
re, causing him to believe that he
y, that he is rich, that he stands in
f nothing, at a time when he is
re, poor, blind and naked. Stupefac-
sion, which leads the greatest part
to the tomb; to death, to eternal
ion, concealing from them the pre-
till the last moment when they
into it!
men are from their infancy in a
ble state through that first sin, that

enormous sin, which separated our first parents from him who had created them for himself; and whose plenteous graces and benedictions caused them to abound in happiness in the terrestial paradise. It is this sin which has corrupted the whole mass and which causes that corruption to descend from the parents upon all the children. Hence ignorance, concupiscence, all sorts of miseries; death also and all the pains which have been justly inflicted as its punishment. So that in the state in which we are born into this world, the following the propensities of our nature is of itself alone sufficient to ruin us, and to plunge us into eternal misery: while to be saved, it is requisite that sin, the source of all our evils, be destroyed and entirely cast out of us with all its impressions and evil consequences.

To do the work of salvation then, is to hate sin, seriously to renounce it, to quit

to endeavour to destroy it by the reme-
s which God prescribes, and which are
be found in penitence; to withstand its
pensities and inclinations; to mortify
the spirit of God the passions and carnal
sires; to return to God by a sincere love
him, a love that triumphs over that love
creatures and of ourselves, which ruins
, and which in reality constitutes sin;
return to him by a love, which taking
off from the things of this earth and from
r own bodies, draws unto this sovereign
od all the motions of our hearts, and
to him consecrates all our actions.

2.—But this hatred of sin and the love
God which works our salvation, and
th which are indeed our salvation itself,
n only come to us from heaven; and they
n only come to us through Jesus Christ,
e only son of God. He bears the sacred
me of Jesus, because *he was given to us to*

be our Saviour, (St. Matt. 1.) and he sav
us not otherwise than *by delivering us fro*
sin through the merits of his death; t
withdrawing us through the means of gra
from the corruption which prevails in
during this present life (Gal. 1.); by kee
ing under, through the impression of h
love, the inordinate motions of conc
piscence, which continually impel us t
wards evil; by inspiring us with a since
contempt for ourselves, and for all th
flatters us upon earth; and by establishi
in our hearts contrary inclinations whi
attract us to things of heaven. The S
of God, says St. John, (John 3.) appear
in this world that he might abolish sin;
came to destroy the works of the de
Whoever remains in him and is attach
to him by the ties of divine love, sins n
as long as he is faithful and he follows
attractions.

It is through Jesus Christ that we recei

from God the power to will and to do: through him come all the good motions of our will, all our good actions; and the Apostle exhorts us *to work out our salvation with fear and trembling*, (Phil. 2.) because he only produces in us these great effects according as he pleases, and through pure mercy. He it is that begins, he that finishes. *By grace*, says the Apostle, (Phil. 1.) *you are saved through the means of faith:* this faith is not of your own acquisition, it is a gift of God; it is not your work, that you should glorify yourself on that account. We are the work of God in the order of grace no less than in the order of nature. *Without me you can do nothing*, says Jesus Christ himself, (John. 15.) *Take heed that you exalt not yourself, and that you keep yourself in fear;* (Rom. 11.) It is not you that support the root; it is the root that supports you.

him, to keep his commandments. [illegible] cording to the wise man, (Eccl. 12 man's *sole business*: this it is that m him happy: *this, of all the things in world, he is to account necessary, and p this,* (St. Luke, 10.) The rest is no than vanity and pastime of the mind. *shall not enter into life nor be saved, but by keeping the commandments,* (Matt. 19.) Wherefore to keep the commandments is to live according to the gospel, is to redeem the pledge we gave in baptism, is to fulfil the duties of our calling, is to do to ourselves the violence requisite for the surmounting the difficulties we meet with in our way to heaven.

The road to perdition is broad, and very numerous are those who follow it. To promote any interest, to make a fortune, fatigues are embraced with willingness, nothing is thought painful, every thing is risked: but in the acquiring salvation we

wish all to be pleasant, easy and agreeable. The smallest difficulties dishearten us; every thing is indulged in, provided it is not a crime. But salvation is not obtained by a life of ease. The way that leads to eternal life is narrow; to advance on that road many conveniences must be renounced; sufferings are to be encountered, passions and desires resisted. And yet man wishes to gain heaven without the expence of sufferings: the number of those who follow that road is smaller than man can say; to enter by the narrow gate demands strenuous exertions, and yet man wishes to enter thereby without all effort. What! shall we be able to enter by the narrow door after having followed to the end the road which is broad? We are unwilling to do violence to ourselves in order to enter by the way of the gospel while it is in our power; and when we shall be desirous of doing it,

it will not be in our power: the door will be found to be shut.

Ask of God the grace to do violence to yourself; put yourself in a state to receive that grace by a renunciation of your passions, by a life of prayer and labour, by the lecture of the gospel and frequent meditation thereon, and by practice of good works.

Seek before all things the kingdom of God and his justice, (Mark 7.)

We cannot be too cautious in securing ourselves for all eternity, (St. Austin.)

Ninth Day.

ON A HORROR OF SIN.

1. SIN, according to St. Austin, is a desire, a word, an action contrary to the law of God: a law eternal and immutable; which prescribes the order to be observed in all things; and which forbids all infringement of it; a law which not only regulates the tongue and the hand but the heart also, and that primarily. All disobedience and violation of the law springs first from the heart; and there it is that man must first make manifest his obedience and submission to God. The heart is the source of sin, and from the heart it issues forth and thence exposes itself. Words and actions are no more than the channels, the instruments of its manifestation.

The law of God equally forbids evil and commands good: in like manner as it is a sin to desire or to love what it forbids, and to do the same either by words or actions, so is it also a sin not to love or desire what it commands; and not to act conformable to it both in our words and actions. Thus we sin when we act directly contrary to the law of God, and we sin when we omit to do what it prescribes. We sin by violating the law, and we sin by not executing the law when execution of it is prescribed. In a word, the two parts of Christian virtue consist in avoiding evil and in doing good.

To love one's self and creatures for their own sake, instead of referring that love to God; to love any thing whatsoever for any other motive than for God's sake; to seek repose, pleasure, happiness, in any thing out of God; to seek unbounded delight in things, the moderate use of which

is prescribed by God's law, all this is the very essence of sin. God alone can give happiness to man, consequently he is the only good which man ought to desire to enjoy. It is allowed him to make use of creatures according to his necessities and with temperance, but it is not allowed him to place his satisfaction in them and his contentment: he must not seek the fulness of enjoyment in them, for happiness they cannot give.

They are no more than trifles, unworthy of our esteem and of our love. Our soul is of a higher nature: it is made only for God, and he alone is deserving of its love and its esteem. Whatever is contrary to this fundamental law is sin.

2.—*By one man sin entered into the world, and in him all mankind have sinned,* (Rom. 5.) Hence the cause why all men are plunged in damnation; hence why

death and all sorts of evils have spread themselves over the earth. This is what is called original sin, because man contracts it in his origin and his birth; because ever since the sin of Adam it has been transmitted by generation to all his children, and thereby its poison and corruption has been propagated throughout the whole human race. On this account the Apostle says, (Eph. 2.) *that through the corruption of nature we are children of wrath, and objects of God's vengeance.*

The two principal wounds which the sin of our first parents has inflicted on our souls, are: ignorance in the mind, and concupiscence, or a propensity to evil in the will: two fatal sources of all the sins which man commits after he has attained to the use of his reason. The children of Adam sin, says St. Austin, either because they know not that what they do is evil, or because they know not the good they ought

to do; or else because though they are conscious of the evil they do, they are impelled to it through the love of pleasure, while the good with which they are acquainted has neither charms for them nor attractions.

Sin renders a man unhappy even during the present life; it blinds the understanding, it corrupts the heart; it extinguishes grace, it deprives him of all virtues, and of all the gifts of God: it makes him the slave of creatures the most contemptible; the child of the devil, the enemy of God, the object of his hatred. It renders him still more miserable in the life to come: it strips him generally of all his goods, temporal and eternal; it produces a lasting separation between him and his God; it plunges him into despair, into damnation, into eternal torments. Can any thing be more deserving of his hatred? This however is not all.

Sin is so great an evil, that unless God were what he essentially is, immutable, eternal, all-powerful, sin would annihilate him. The sinner in his madness proceeds so far as to say in his heart that there is no God, (Ps. 13.) His wishes are, says St. Bernard, either that God should not know of his sin, or that he should not punish it. Now if God did not know when sin is committed, his knowledge would not extend to all things; if he did not punish it, he would be without justice, and in either case he would not be God. So that sin has a tendency to annihilate God. This is so true, that when the Son of God became incarnate, and took upon himself our sins, they caused his death: and St. Paul says, *that when we sin we crucify him anew and put him to death.*

3.—What horror then ought not a Christian to entertain for a monster, which has

caused death to the whole human race; which brings to the sinner eternal death; which caused death to Jesus Christ; which declares war against God himself; which, could God suffer destruction, would destroy God; in a word, which is itself the greatest of all evils, and the source from whence all others proceed! Fly then from sin, says the wise man, as you would fly from a serpent, (Eccl. 21.) If you come near to it, you will be seized by it. Its teeth are like to the teeth of a lion, to devour souls. Every iniquity is a double edged sword, which at one blow kills both soul and body, and separates man from God himself, who is his true life: and the wounds it inflicts are incurable to every one but the Almighty Physician.

All the martyrs of the old law and of the new have preferred to suffer the most cruel torments, and to lose even their life, than to break the law of God by a single sin.

Joseph was willing to let go his robe and endure imprisonment rather than commit a crime, (Gen. 39.) Susannah said it was better to fall into the hands of men, and undergo the whole weight of their fury, being free from guilt, than to sin in the sight of God. These two had a just sense of the enormity of sin; and we undoubtedly should imitate them, were we only convinced that it is the work of the devil; and that to commit it, is to execute his wishes, and to render ourselves the companion of his rebellion and his damnation.

Whoever desires to avoid sin, must, 1. Greatly mistrust himself; must consult his own weakness by flying from occasions and dangers. 2. Must be careful to be well instructed in the truths of the gospel and in the duties of his situation, for ignorance is the source of many sins. 3. He must abate in himself all unruly appetite for the things of this earth, as well as all

dread of temporal evils: for, St. Austin says, all sins spring from those two sources: cupidity and fear. 4. He must never lose sight of what awaits him at the end of life: death, judgement, hell, paradise. 5. He must love God as his Father, must fear him as his Lord and his Judge. 6. He must, like the paralytic in his bed, continually present himself before Jesus Christ the physician of his soul. He died in order to deliver us from sin, and he alone can preserve us from sin, or extricate us when we are implicated in its bands. He loved not *sin*; he knew not sin; and he defied his enemies to convict him of any sin: still he was treated as if he had been sin itself; for he took sin upon him in order to destroy it, and to make us just with the justice of God; that justice, of which, by his grace, he is the author and principle.

Pray to God that he would impart you a great horror of sin; a sincere a profound grief for having so much offend him. Of all losses, the loss of grace (a sin is the enemy of grace) is the only l that is to be deplored with tears, for it the only loss which tears can repair.

What fruit therefore had you then those disorders of which you are n ashamed? for there is no other end of th but death, (Rom. 6.)

Woe to that soul which dares to sep rate itself from thee, O God, in the hop of finding any thing better than thee, (Austin.)

Tenth Day.

ON PENITENCE.

1.—As sin offends a God omnipotent, justice itself, sanctity itself, goodness, wisdom infinite, so, in a certain sort, it is necessarily infinite in its temerity, its injustice, its impiety, its malice and its folly. Being directly opposite to his infinite majesty and divine perfections, it cannot possibly go unpunished: one of two things must necessarily take place, either that man punish himself for his offences, or be punished by God. It is in no wise to be questioned but that unless the sinner take up arms against himself, and by penance during the present life make reparation for his transgressions, God will in the next take his justice into his own hands. He

hates with a sovereign and eternal hatred the sin that is not expiated during life: and of course he must punish such a sin as a God; that is to say, eternally, and with all the rigour which so great an injury deserves.

This rigour the criminal cannot escape except by a penance undergone with perfect consent and willingness, proportioned to his own strength, and to the greatness of his offence. This Sovereign Judge pardons those only who do not pardon themselves. He shews indulgence to those only who shew none to themselves, but on the contrary treat themselves with a holy severity. To chastise ourselves therefore out of a zeal for justice, in order to appease God's anger, and to conciliate his favour, is what is called doing penance. If this is not done when there is ability to do it, or if there is not a sincere disposition to do it, the evil is wholly incurable; sin establishes

itself for ever, and renders the sinner eternally miserable.

Unless you do penance, says our Saviour, *you shall all in like manner perish,* (Luke 13.) To do penance therefore, or perish, is the only alternative. But penance must be done in such manner as to efface sin; to heal the wounds which sin has made; to to do away all its impressions so that the sinner relapse not. For, according to the Fathers, to do penance is to bewail past sins and to commit no more in future, and so have no cause to bewail new ones: insomuch that unless the penitence be accompanied by a change of life, be it ever so austere, it is vain and of no effect.

There are such things as false penances; there are imperfect penances; there are temporary penances which last only for a time. False penances change not the heart; they are not grounded on any opposition to sin; they bear only an exterior, a

surface of penance. Imperfect penanc
are those which only excite a struggle
uneasiness in the heart; they give rise
certain emotions and sensations, but t
change they produce is only partial. Th
are imperfect penances which are too s
perficial for the crimes committed; whi
prevail upon the sinner to abandon inde
some sins, while they leave him to comm
others equally great or even still great
Temporary penances are those which
deed make a good beginning, but whi
gradually relax and accomplish nothi
Sin is an evil in its nature eternal:
deserves a punishment that ends not.
is nothing but just that the penance fo
should last at least for the whole of li
should last till the sin be blotted out.

2.—Sin takes its rise from the heart, a
from thence it proceeds to external actio
to dry up the source of the evil, repentan

must likewise take its rise from the heart, and from thence must proceed to actions, and regulate the whole course of life. This is what God himself has taught us by his prophets and apostles: be converted to me with your whole heart (Joel, 2.); rend your hearts by a lively sorrow: as it is a customary expression with us in great affliction, to say, that it has broken our hearts; such must be the repentance of the heart. Besides this it requires fasts, tears, lamentations, as marks of the austerities of penance, which indeed are its exterior, and which give to it a body: wherein are included all troubles and mortifications. In addition to which God in many places enjoins alms-deeds, and the relief of those who are in want, who are under oppression, or are friendless, (Isa. 1. and 58.) It is not doing penance, if when we are in a situation to do these good offices, we omit to do them. *Wash clean*

your hands, says St. James (James, 4.); *purify your hearts, put on grief, mourning and tears; let your laughter be changed into weepings and your exultations into sorrow.*

According to St. Austin, penitence is neither certain nor sincere, but inasmuch as it springs from a hatred of sin, and from a love for God. A hatred and a love, which extinguish sin in the heart, by producing in the heart a lively regret for having offended this infinite goodness: which lead a man to the confession of his sins in the sentiments of a profound humility and a real disesteem of himself; which inspire him with an ardent zeal to punish himself and to make satisfaction to God by proportionate chastisements, by fastings, by tears, by lamentations, by prayers, alms-deeds, labours, and good works of every kind. It is not possible to love God as the source of all justice without feeling a

hatred for sin, which is the enemy of justice; and without using all means to destroy it, in order to be reconciled to God and to appease his anger. In a word, where there is not the love of God, there cannot be a hatred of sin, there cannot be repentance.

Can a man weep too much, can a man use too great severity against sin, which deserves hell? deserves to be cursed eternally by God? To lose God, to lose one's soul, to lose a kingdom, to render one's self subject to be eternally tormented; can such evils be too much lamented? can any price be rated as too high, which redeems for us such great blessings, and which frees us from such enormous evils?

But according to St. Gregory the remedy ought to be of a nature contrary to the evil; and penance, according to St. Cyprian, ought not to be less than the crime. (Cyprian de lapsis.) Now the mind has been puffed up with pride and ambition,

let it then be humbled: the flesh h
proved rebellious, let it be mortified: t
affections have been defiled with avari
they must be purified by disinterestedne
by alms-deeds, by charity: the excess
of intemperance and pleasure must
expiated by fasting, by abstinence a
mourning. Great sins require power
remedies, bad habits great violences, a
so of the rest.

In fine, penitence is, according to the F
thers and the whole Church in the Coun
of Trent, a baptism of labour; and m
cannot be restored to favour with God
the sacrament of penance, but by intern
groanings of the spirit and much sorrow.

3.—David is a pattern of a true penite
and for our penitence to be sincere it mu
be of a piece with his. In the peniten
of David there are four principal chara
teristics. 1. I am prepared, says he,

am prepared, O Lord, for chastisement. I will receive with willingness all the afflictions, the pains, the miseries which it may please thee to send me. 2. My sorrow, and my sin which is the cause of it, is at all times before my sight; I never lose sight of what I must deplore to the end of life. 3. I will confess my iniquity and I will not fear to declare it. 4. My sin shall hold me in continual solicitude, and my soul shall not rest. This penitent king felt within him that his transgressions mounted above his head, like an insurportable burthen, and that his flesh was totally corrupted; in the bitterness of his grief he walked the whole day with his countenance sorrowful; from his heart proceeded nothing but sighs and lamentations. If we have in our hearts true contrition, if we love God as we ought to love him; and in like manner if we hate sin, we also shall experience the same effects, and we shall

adopt the same dispositions. But not for great sinners alone is penance to be embraced: the Council of Trent says that the life of a Christian ought to be a continual penance: as no man is without sin, so all ought to lead a penitential life, and submit to the mortification of the spirit and of the senses. Penance is a remedy for sins committed, a preservative and a preventative against recurrence of sin; a counterpoise against inclination, and a stay to human weakness: now there is no man who is not weak, and who is not in continual danger of falling; and no one therefore must seek to be exempted from this life of penance.

Ignorance and concupiscence, unless great precaution is made use of, lead infallibly to evil. We must guard against the first by seeking to be more and more instructed, and by praying to be enlightened by the Holy Spirit: and against the latter,

by the continual violence which we must use against our passions; and by assiduously beseeching God to strengthen and support us.

And were we fortunate enough to be free from sin, still Jesus Christ is our leader and pattern; we are bound to render ourselves conformable to him, and to tread in his footsteps, in suffering, in labour and in penance. His are the orders, and we have only to obey. In fine, penance is the road that leads to heaven; it is the means of obtaining perseverance in acting well. Of course, to endeavour to shun penance, is to seek to be deprived of the most necessary of all graces; it is to exclude ourselves from our celestial inheritance.

Address yourself frequently to Jesus Christ, and ask of him a true conversion, a lively faith, a penitent heart, and perfect love for him whom you have offended. On no other terms can pardon be obtained.

Bring forth fruits worthy of penan
(St. Matt. 3.)

O penitents, what will it avail you
humble yourselves, if you change not y
lives? (St. Austin.)

Fear not to undergo any pain or labo
be they what they may, in order to esc
eternal torments.

Eleventh Day.

NOT TO DEFER OUR CONVERSION.

1.—THERE is nothing more danger
than to remain in a state of sin, even v
it not longer than for a few moments,
thereby delay to enter into oneself in
sincerity of a true conversion. It is

remain in a state of opposition and revolt against God, and in a state of damnation. Hell itself is removed from such a state but one step. Our life hangs only by a thread; if this thread but break, our perdition is inevitable. Nothing is more certain than that damnation awaits those who die in this state. Nothing is more certain than death, and nothing more uncertain than the duration and termination of life.

It is then a dreadful rashness, it is excessive folly to defer to some other time the abandonment of sin, the reparation of the injury it has done to God, the restoration of the soul from death: in a word, to defer repentance. The moments of life are in no wise at our disposal; so that we cannot attempt to dispose of them. From God we received life, and from him we must receive the continuance of it as long as it shall please him to grant it. That

continuance depends solely on his bounty: when he once cuts the thread there is no more time for us, no appeal. The decree he pronounces is irrevocable, and it will decide our fate for ever. Who is the person who knows that he will not die in a moment when he is in sin? This has happened to many others, so that it is most extravagant for any one to flatter himself that he shall not be of the number.

I will begin to-morrow, you say! But will you be put in possession of to-morrow? God promises you pardon if you do penance; but he has not promised you to-morrow wherein to do it. If you have lived in sin till now, begin from now to live well; cease to do evil, learn to do good, (Isa. 1.) Delay not to be converted to the Lord, says the scripture, (Eccl. 5.) and defer not from day to day. His anger will come down upon you in an instant, and when the moment of his vengeance shall arrive,

he will destroy you. His anger hangs over you during the whole of the time that you remain in sin, it only waits for the moment when it shall burst.

How do you know that it will not this day be said to you, as it was said to the rich man in the gospel, Foolish man, this very night will thy soul be demanded of thee, and what will become of thee after all thy faithlessness? The putting off repentance has ever been considered as a sign of reprobation.

St. Chrysostom says, that the unconcernedness in which a sinner lives after his sin, is more irritating to God than the sin itself. St. Gregory the Great says, that a sin which is not immediately expiated by penance draws on another sin, this second sin draws on a third, and so on; and that the last is greater than the first. The longer a person remains in sin, the more he becomes blinded, the more he grows

hardened: and to what do we attribute
and hardness of heart but to
final impenitence, which is the
of all misery.

2.—The example of the good
only example of the kind
scriptures. A man must have
senses to flatter himself he can
such an example any reason
Besides, although he was not
till the latest moment of life,
true that he did not defer his
the latest hour of life was the first
faith. From the moment that his
were opened, he recognized his
he accepted of death and he
he offered it up together with that
Christ as a penance imposed on
Almighty God, as a sacrifice of
which was to expiate his crimes.

On the other hand, reflect what has happened to the world at large in the days of Noah; to the inhabitants of Sodom in the days of Abraham The repentance of Antiochus, with all his tears and his great possessions, was rejected by God; and he did not succeed in obtaining that mercy he so much supplicated. The foolish virgins, on account of their not being ready in time, were rejected with these words of reprobation: *I know you not.*

Let us then labour without delay in the work of our salvation: let us *fear and tremble lest the time of mercy escape us,* (Phil. 2.) It is God who gives the desire of conversion, and conversion itself; it is he who gives the grace of repentance. On ourselves it depends not, it is a particular gift of God. If, at the time when we defer our conversion, he impart not to us the desire of it, we shall never be converted; if he inspire us not with a love of repent-

ance, we shall not repent; or, if w
we shall not do it as we ought.
spoke the prophet Jeremy to his Go
Lord, do thou convert me, and I sh
converted: for it is thou who art my
and my God: my salvation is in thy h
and after being converted by thee
penance, (Jer. 31.) This then is a
not to be neglected: we must seek the
while he may be found; we must call
him while he is near, (Isa. 55.)

To defer making reparation to Go
the injury done to him, is to be guilt
new injury: it is an approval of the
It is to dispute with him the right he
over our souls: it is to refuse him th
part of our life, which is our youth a
time of health; and to assign over t
the leavings of the world, of our pa
and of the devil: it is to despise the
ness and the bounty of his mercy; all
are so many crimes which deserv

God should abandon us, and withhold from us his grace when we shall be in the greatest need of it.

X.—To put off one's conversion till death, as most sinners do, is to render it almost impossible. To be converted then requires a miracle of grace, so extraordinary, that it very rarely happens; nor does the scripture afford us any example of it. It is to attempt to repent at a time when we are not capable of acting at all, and frequently not even of thinking. So that, St. Austin says, that the repentance of a person in the infirmities of sickness is at best but infirm; and that there is reason to fear lest the repentance of one dying, do itself die, and come to nothing. God *can* give, says he, repentance in that moment, but he no where promises to give it. If then you desire that God shew you mercy, do penance while you have health.

In order to be converted, it is necessa
that the inclinations, the dispositions a
the sentiments of the heart undergo
change. That the bands by which t
heart is tied to creatures be broken asunde
that old habits be laid aside: that God
henceforth loved with more ardour th
any other thing has ever yet been love
that the virtues of Christianity be adopte
From having been proud we must becon
humble; from ambitious, little; from av
ricious, charitable; from lustful, chast
from choleric, meek and patient; from r
vengeful, willing to pardon all things a
to love our enemies. All which is not us
ally brought about in so little time, a
especially not at a moment when the sic
person is wholly occupied with his illnes
with the alarms of death, with the makin
his will, with his worldly affairs, wi
the concerns of his family; at a mome
when the sick person possesses neither t

necessary presence of mind, nor freedom of acting.

Conversions which are made at that time are justly suspected: and generally the fear of death and of hell, interest, and human respect, operate more strongly than the love of God and hatred of sin: it is the fear of suffering everlasting fire; not the fear of sinning. We wish not to die without the sacraments; we wish not to cast a disreputation upon our family; we wish not to pass for hardened sinners; but in general it is sin that leaves *us*, rather than we who leave sin.

Reflect seriously upon the length of time that you have delayed to give yourself to God; and tremble at the danger you are in of ruining yourselves.

Say, from the bottom of your heart, in the presence of God, my determination is fixed; from this moment I will begin, (Ps. 76.)

Because I called you, says the Lord, and you would not hear, I also will laugh when death shall come, and will not hear you, (Prov. 1.)

Twelfth Day.

ON ALMS-DEEDS OR WORKS OF MERCY.

1.—IN the Greek language, one and the same word signifies alms-deeds and mercy; and alms-deeds ought to be the effect of mercy. Now mercy is a virtue which takes a share in the misery of our neighbour by the compassion we feel for him, and by the aid we afford. To feel

therefore in our hearts for our neighbour when he is in misery, and to assist him according to our means, is truly that work of mercy which we call alms-deeds. We must not however forget that man consists of two parts, and that if his body has its miseries, his soul has her miseries also. We perform a work of mercy spiritual when we administer to the necessities of the soul. The body is in misery when it is without nourishment, without clothing, without lodging, without assistance, without health; and the soul is in misery when it has not the things necessary to salvation; intelligence, virtue, conduct. Therefore to give food to the poor, to cloathe them, to take them into our house, to patronise them, to deliver them from oppression, to attend them in sickness and in infirmity, is to exercise the works of mercy corporal; to instruct their minds, to reprimand them when acting wrong, to welcome them, to

draw them over to the love of virtue and of truth by good counsel, by prayer, by good example, is to exercise the works of mercy spiritual.

But inasmuch as the nature of the soul surpasses that of the body, so much does the benefit rendered to the former surpass whatever can be done for the latter. As the body is only made for the use of the soul, and is no more than its organ, whatever comforts we may administer to it are to have no other end in view but the salvation of the soul. They are to be used as means to gain it over to God. These works of mercy, when they are such as they ought to be, spring from no other motive than charity. Now charity dictates that we love our neighbour as ourselves; that we procure him the same good things we ought to procure for ourselves; and that can be no other than the sovereign good. This is the only thing which charity

poses to itself in the love of our neighbour and in whatever good we do him: it wishes to save his soul, and it is in order to gain it over to God, that it applies itself to the necessities of the body.

Works of mercy then, when prompted by the spirit of Christianity, have the *soul* of our neighbour for their object: and if we were actuated by charity, we should never render assistance to a neighbour without making him sensible that the life of the body is indeed nothing, and that the life of the soul is excellent above our understanding: that all our endeavours ought to be directed to the acquiring this spiritual life, to the nourishing it, to the strengthening it, to the preserving it at the hazard of every thing else. Indeed nothing has greater power and influence on the mind than the words and example of one whose charity manifests itself by sensible effects: it is a sermon operative and to

the life. Nothing contributes more to reclaim a wandering soul, if we but avail ourselves of the opportunity of doing the good work with that discretion, that dexterity and ingenuity which true charity will suggest. This is a talent for which we shall be called to account at the last day, and which we take not sufficient pains to turn to the profit of ourselves and others.

2.—There is no man living who is not indispensibly obliged to exercise works of mercy; either by his riches, if he be possessed of them, or by his attentions, his labour and his influence, that his neighbour may be relieved in his poverty, in his sickness, in his infirmity, when he is oppressed, when he suffers affliction or disgrace. If a person is without all means of affording assistance, he can still entertain a good will towards the sufferer. He can pray for those who are suffering, that God would

be pleased to send them necessary aid, and to accord them patience in their trial and peace of mind: and these are valuable works of mercy and precious in God's sight; of these the poorest people are capable, and sometimes more capable than the rich. In cases when we see our neighbour living in ignorance or in sin, we are obliged, in a more particular manner to procure for him the means of deliverance from his situation, if we have it in our power; if we have it not in our power, we must pray for him, and edify him by examples of piety. To behold our neighbour in such a condition without emotion, and without feeling a desire to relieve him, is a crime; it is to be wanting to the first duty of charity.

This duty has its foundation in the commandment of loving our neighbour as ourselves. Nobody whatever would be willing that this duty should be neglected in his

regard, were he himself in need; nob
therefore can be exempt from the obl
tion of doing what is in his power to as
those who are in a like situation. I
haps, with regard to the necessities of
soul, many people would be unwilling
others should undertake to give them
vice, or to find fault with them; and
difficulty would be persuaded that such
be a duty of charity. But this arises f
the pride and blindness of their hearts,
from an attachment to the objects of t
passions by which they are held in sub
tion. Certain it is, that if they underst
their danger, they would be delighted
have a hand extended towards them
their rescue: and when death shall o
their eyes at that moment when they s
be about to appear before their Maker,
will wish they had been benefited by an
of charity of this sort. Wherefore, we c
not be considered to love our neighbou

ourselves, if we be not touched to see him in such a situation, and if we be not desirous to procure him, when it lies in our power, the advice and assistance necessary to deliver him.

There is nothing which the scripture recommends with more urgency both in the Old and New Testament, than works of mercy, and the other assistances which each one owes to his neighbour according to his necessities. St. John says, (1 John, 3.) that *he who shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him, has not charity. Faith,* according to St. James, (ch. 2.) *is a body without a soul, when it produceth not works of charity.* St. Paul tells us, (Heb. 13.) that *by such offerings we make God our friend.* He advises us, (Gal. 6.) *to do good to all men, without being tired, particularly to those whom the same faith has made, as we ourselves are, servants of the Lord; and that we shall*

receive the fruit of our good works in du
time. He says, (2 Cor. 8. and 9.) that *th*
poverty of those who suffer want is to b
supplied by the abundance of those who ar
rich, that so the spiritual wants of thos
same rich ones may, in the day of need, b
supplied by the spiritual abundance of th
poor of Jesus Christ, and so every one enjo
an equality of gifts. This same Apost
compares alms-deeds to the seed of th
sower, which scattered on the earth pr
duces the abundance of harvest: that h
who sows not, pretends not to reap; th
he who sows sparingly, will reap but spa
ingly, and that he who sows abundantl
in abundance also will reap. In fi
Jesus Christ in the Gospel, (Matt. 2
adduces no other cause of the damnati
of the reprobate, than the violation of t
law of charity. *I was hungry,* he will s
to them, *and you gave me not to eat.*
ye cursed into everlasting fire.

3.—To refuse relief to a poor man is to refuse it to Jesus Christ. He regards as done to himself whatever good we do to our neighbour, if we do it through love of him, and in his spirit: and he assures us that the poor whom we assist, will procure for those who assist them in the spirit of charity, a place in the eternal tabernacles; because as Jesus Christ is in them to receive, so will he also be in them to reward the gift.

Thus the rich stand infinitely more in need of the poor, than the poor do of the rich. The poor man stands in need of the rich man for this life only, which passes away; but the rich man stands in need of the poor man, to introduce him into heaven, and render his Almighty Judge propitious. The just man, says the Royal Prophet, (Ps. 111.) has distributed his goods among the poor with liberality, and his justice remains for ever; for he will for

ever enjoy the recompence of his good deeds: and even in this life, according to St. Paul, God who gives the seed to be sown, will give also the bread that shall be needful for life; will give increase to what he shall sow, and will continue to make his righteousness to fructify.

We sow our corn, we traffic with our money, and without fear of losing it, although our every thing is risked for a profit that is very uncertain; and shall we fear to give our money to Jesus Christ, when he so expressly promises to recompence us a hundred fold in this life, and with an eternal kingdom in the other?

He demands nothing more of each one than what he is able to perform; but it is his pleasure, that each one do perform to the extent of what he is able. Now does that person do what he is able to do, who hoards up his treasures for necessities in future, imaginary necessities, while an

immense number of poor perish before his eyes through want and wretchedness? especially when the regular returns of the year furnish such a one with sufficient abundance to supply those wants which are created in his apprehension only, and created there because he has not learned to put his trust in that providence whose resources are inexhaustible.

Jesus Christ, according to the holy Fathers, claims to himself the whole of what is over, not of what our covetousness, our ambition, or our sensuality has to spare, for these passions never leave any thing over, but consume the whole of our own possessions and the possessions of others also; but of that which remains after the ordinary necessities of our proper and appropriate stations have been attended to: and indeed of that which remains over after the essential necessities of nature alone have been attended to, when the

demand upon our charity is urgent and pressing. For would it be right to allow ourselves whatever might be thought to belong to our condition in life; whatever might be called the proprieties of our state, at a time, when we behold Jesus Christ dying for want, in the persons of the poor?

As to the rest, we are to take care that our alms-deeds, in the first place, be a voluntary oblation, dictated by charity and not extorted by violence from our avarice. Secondly, that they be done out of our own property, property lawfully acquired; for works of charity done by means of property which belongs to another, or acquired unjustly, is abominable in the sight of God. It is stripping one to clothe another; taking from one the means of life in order to afford it to another: such is a robbery and a sacrilege, not alms-deeds. Thirdly, that our alms-deeds be done before death: for

what credit is that man entitled to, who only gives what he can no longer keep? Fourthly, that our alms-deeds be done to those of our neighbourhood, if they be really poor and in want; to the poor of good character, and who are conspicuous for their good life; to those of our own parish, and of the place where our property is situated; to those with whom by the destination of providence we happen to be connected: by alms-deeds thus administered, the rich and poor, as the scripture has it, meet one another, (Prov. 22. 2.) Fifthly, that our alms-deeds be done with good will, freely and generously, without vanity and without self-seeking; with a charity dictated by tender-heartedness and pity: a charity which keeps in view rather the spiritual than the temporal benefit of its object, and which renders the receiver sensible of the intention of the giver.

Examine yourselves with regard to y
conduct towards the poor: see whe
you behave towards them as member
Jesus Christ: and whether you render t
all the service you are able and which
owe them.

Whatever you have done to the l
of my brethren, you have done to
(Matt. 25.)

Whilst we have time let us do goo
all men, but especially to those who
the same faith and same piety are,
ourselves, become of the household of
Lord, (Gall. 6.)

If you do not relieve them, you
them, (St. Ambrose.)

Let but charity overflow the heart,
you will always be able to find someth
to give away, (St. Austin.)

Thirteenth Day.

OF SUFFERINGS.

1.—ALMIGHTY God, when he created the universe, established all his works according to a most excellent order of gradation; an order which constituted their beauty and their ornament. Man held the middle place between his Sovereign Good, and the good things which were created. While he was raised above all corporeal creatures, his station was infinitely below that being who gave him existence. Subject in all things to his Creator, he rendered to him with joy the homage of his obedience, of his love, of his adoration. Lord of all other things created, he made use of them as steps whereon to rise towards that Supreme Good whom he looked upon as his happiness, his center and his rest. In

his works, he contemplated, he admired, he adored, the wisdom, the power, the greatness of the worker.

Sin has deranged this rightful, this reasonable order: it has set man in opposition to his Creator; it has suggested to him the desire of making himself like to God; of assuming to himself the source of his light, of his justice, of his goodness: and by such over-weening pride he fell from the sublime state wherein, at his creation, he had been placed, into an abyss of miseries: in such sort, that, far from becoming to himself his own god, he became the slave of the vilest of creatures, and tendered to them what he owed only to God: his mind, his heart, his love, his obedience.

The beauty of that order which was first established could not be restored but by the punishment of the guilty party, and by the destruction of sin which had produced the disorder. All things are as they ought

ne, when the innocent is happy, and sinner is in misery and suffering. It is mmutable and eternal law; it cannot violated without destroying all justice. erefore God, who is justice itself, has lemned guilty man to this numerous ction of miseries, which have inun- d the earth, ever since the sin of our parents: and he has threatened those eternal death, who shall refuse to mit with humility and with love to so a sentence. So that, not to turn the eries of this life into a remedy and a ifice of expiation for sin, is to be ictory to God's appointment; it is to ain in sin; it is evidently to expose s self to become in this world, and in next, the victim of divine vengeance: is world, by undergoing all those evils h are not to be avoided, and death f which is the completion of them; and e other world, damnation everlasting.

On the other hand, the only means o
rendering ourselves happy in eternity, is
to chastise ourselves in this world, and t
receive with willing hearts, from the pater
nal hand of God, the chastisements whic
he inflicts. There are no evils in thi
world, but what may thereby becom
excellent means of purifying ourselves fro
the defilements of sin, and of wholl
expiating it; of obtaining God's grace
and of meriting his kingdom.

2.—All men deserve to suffer, and indee
do suffer: one in one way, another i
another; whether it be in this world or i
the other; for all are sinners. But as a
do not receive their sufferings in the spiri
of repentance, so do they not derive profi
from them. There is an advantage i
suffering, but the suffering must be under
gone for Jesus Christ, and in his spirit
must be welcomed with love, and accepte

of as a deserved penance. On the other hand, to be impatient in suffering, and to oppose resistance; to undergo the penalty due to our crimes, without lamenting those crimes, and without renouncing them, is to be miserable both in this world and the next.

Crosses and afflictions are the portion of the elect here below. They are all that Jesus Christ has promised them in this life; but he has at the same time promised to give them his spirit, whereby to receive their sufferings in conformity with his views and dispositions. Thus only can we enter into heaven; and whoever is unwilling to enter by such a way, will not enter at all. Wholly to be exempt from suffering, is a sign that we do not yet belong to Jesus Christ. A life of prosperity, of pleasures, of delights, is a mark of reprobation. These things produce a forgetfulness of God, attach the soul to this world, corrupt the heart, and nourish the passions.

Very different are the effects produced by sufferings. They take off the affections from creatures: a salutary bitterness diffused over the objects of his passions, forces the sinner to return to him who alone can give him happiness, (St. Aug.) It is good for me, O Lord, said holy David, that thou hast humbled me by afflicting me. Turn, my soul, to the center of thy repose, (Ps. 114.) We do not think about returning to God, when things go well with us upon the earth. The pleasures of life are enchantments, says the Psalmist; but when we meet with nothing but difficulties and vexations, but disgraces and persecutions, then we are inclined to take refuge in God, and to seek in him our consolation. It is the method he usually makes use of to bring sinners to a sense of their courses, and to rouse them from their lethargy. When we see ourselves rejected by creatures, we throw ourselves into the arms of

the Creator, and we experience the sweets of his paternal tenderness.

"These good beginnings, which sufferings bring about in the soul, are by the same continued, improved and increased. By sufferings, man is kept in humiliation under the hand of him who only strikes that he may cure; and by them the soul is prepared to receive the impressions of his grace, which to the humble soul is never refused. Thus sufferings, by producing in man the virtue of patience, which, according to the scripture, is perfect in its operations, render him susceptible of all good; and conduct him to perseverance, which is the crown of every virtue. Instead of which, prosperity enervates the soul, throws her into a state of negligence, and produces pride; gives rise to all vices, and excites a loathing for penitential exercises; thereby erecting an insurmountable obstacle to the return of a sinner, and preventing his reconciliation.

3.—God never pardons sin without satisfaction being made, or without a sincere resolution to make satisfaction to his justice; which satisfaction cannot be made without undergoing what is painful to nature. This satisfaction, according to the Council of Trent, is performed, not only by the penance which the priest is bound to enjoin, or by penances voluntarily chosen but moreover by all ill accidents which befall a man; by the afflictions and miseries of life, which God, like a kind father, willing to accept of, by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, in expiation of past sins whenever man submits to them with humility and good will, and undergoes them in the spirit of penance, as a chastisement from the hand of his heavenly father. This it is that he ought to say, "Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgements are right." (Ps. 118.) "Here burn, here cut, here spare not such a sinner as I am, pro-

thou wilt but pardon me hereafter," (St. Aug.) Too happy to escape, by means of chastisements so short and easy, those eternal punishments, which by such manifold sins I have deserved.

"*The Lord,*" says St. Paul, (Heb. 12.) "*chastises those whom he loves, and he inflicts stripes on all whom he receives into the number of his children.*" Grow not therefore weary of suffering. In that God treats you as his children; and were you to escape chastisements, while all others undergo them, you would not be truly his children. We ought to blush at being delicate members, while our head wears a crown of thorns. Jesus is a man of sorrows, and we wish to be men of enjoyments and pleasures: he knows by so much experience what it is to suffer, and we are unwilling to be initiated in so salutary a science! In what then appears that conformity with Jesus Christ, which is the destiny of all his

with joy and consolation in the midst of hi
sufferings; while those who live in plea
sures and prosperity are gnawed withi
by chagrin and sadness. The joy whic
they seem to taste is only on their lips
their heart is dry, withered, discontente
The servants of the Lord appear sometime
to be overwhelmed with a crowd of evil
and yet, calm and tranquil, content in th
interior of their mind, they would not h
willing to give up their situation for an
exchange of temporal things. The childre
of the world, on the contrary, appear t
swim in joy, and at the same time, a bu
then to themselves, ever dissatisfied wi
their pleasures, ever envious of the happ
ness of others, they are every mome
seeking a change; and they have no soo
er obtained that change, than they se
again some other change with an eagerne
which discovers the emptiness of the
hearts, and the miseries to which their i
terior is a prey.

Let us frequently meditate, and meditate seriously, upon our Saviour's sufferings: on him, who instead of a quiet and easy life, which he was at liberty to make choice of, *preferred the cross, despising the ignominy of it and the shame,* (Heb. 12. 2.) And can any one be discouraged; can any one be fatigued, who considers as he ought so moving an object? We have not yet, in our resistance to sin, resisted like our Saviour unto death, shedding our blood; and shall we dare to complain?

"Acknowledge then, in the sentiments "of a lively faith, the happiness of those "who suffer in the spirit of Christianity. "Fix your eyes frequently, nay keep them "fixed continually, if possible, upon Jesus "Christ dying and nailed to the cross. "Pay to him, in the situation to which his "love of us has brought him, your homage "and adoration: ask of him the grace to

" partake of his sufferings in this world
" that you may partake of his glory in th
" world to come."

If any one will come after me, let hi renounce himself, let him take up his cro all the days of his life and follow m (St. Luke, 9.)

The cross of Jesus Christ will not say us without our cross in addition. Christian ought to remain for his whol life fixed to it, together with him. Th time is not yet come to draw the nail and unloose ourselves from the cros (St. Aust.)

Fourteenth Day.

ON THE CONTEMPT OF THE WORLD.

1.—THE world, which the Christian is obliged to contemn, is nothing else than that society of sinners, who are united together in interest, in plans, in passions; by concupiscence, and by the love of the things of this world, and of all that which death will take from us: a society of people who conspire together to do away with the truths of the gospel, by giving currency to maxims which are contrary to it. This corruption, so predominant in the world, and which renders the world so contagious to all who wish to serve God, St. John reduces to three principal passions.

The first is the concupiscence of the flesh, which is nothing else but the desire and love of the pleasures of the senses of

whatever nature they may be; not excepting those which the world calls innocent; since the gospel does not allow us to love any pleasure for its own sake, and without a reference to God. For example, we find a pleasure in eating, drinking, in sleeping, in things every way allowable. We are perfectly free to use this or that pleasure, to repair the strength of the body, in order to be able to labour and execute our duties; or for other reasons which God approves of; but we are not permitted to enjoy such pleasure for its own sake alone; nor to seek our satisfaction in it, nor our happiness. That would be contrary to what we owe to God as our last end and our sovereign good. This principle is applicable to all those pleasures which accompany our necessary and lawful actions. We ought to use this world, says the apostle, as if we used it not, without attachment and without passion. We are to enjoy

these pleasures in a passing manner, and to have our aim directed to God, as our ultimate end. He alone ought to be the object of our love. Pleasure is necessary in order to excite us to those actions which we are obliged to perform, since, without pleasure, we should not prevail upon ourselves to perform them: still our soul was not made to dwell in them, much less to give itself up to pleasures which are criminal.

The second passion of which St. John speaks, is the concupiscence of the eyes; which is nothing else, according to St. Austin, than to desire to behold, to know, to make trial of, to become acquainted with what is new and curious; with things which are neither necessary nor profitable in regard to salvation and our duties: also to become acquainted with things which are necessary and useful merely for the sake of being acquainted with them, and not for the purpose of making use of them

as we ought to do, and of referring them to God. This is what is called curiosity; a passion which extends generally to all things which a man can desire to know, whether through the medium of the senses or otherwise. As the desire of knowledge, which is natural to man, is never satisfied so long as it exercises itself upon things that are incapable of fully gratifying it, nor so long as it does not confine itself to its grand object, which is God, and his truth; so curiosity is a passion which has no bounds: it excites in man an infinite number of impetuosities and disquietudes which agitate him, and unfit him for a relish of things which are heavenly.

Other passions cause the soul to suffe herself to be filled with a crowd of externa objects, which corrupt her by occupying place which belongs only to God, ar which God alone can fill. But by curiosi she goes out of herself, and running fr

creature to creature, she gives herself up in succession to every object that attracts her. In this dissipation, fixed to nothing, and roving about like the vagrant Cain, she scarcely ever turns her attention to herself. God alone, who is truth itself, is capable of giving her a fixed stability, and in proportion as she is attracted by the multitude of objects which surround her, she loses a taste for the true and essential good, and is ever removing farther and farther from it.

2.—The third passion of the children of this world, is the pride of life! It is an inordinate desire to be noticed, to be in honour in the world, to command, to excel, to be elevated above others: it is the entertaining a high opinion of one's self, of one's own abilities, talents, and other qualities both natural and acquired, and of one's own desert. It is a disdainful

contempt of one's neighbour, taking much delight in lowering him, as in ele ting one's self. This passion is in gen open to all the impressions which p can produce in the human heart, an ever eager for human glory and hu greatness. Now, to follow this inclinat to give one's self up to it, to regulate it as a principle one's conduct in life, i belong to the world, and to be an en of God. It is to give ear to the word the serpent of old: you will become unto gods, (Gen. 3.) It is to give ea that seducer, who dared to say to the of God himself, *I will give to thee all power and this glory, if thou wilt a me,* (Luke, 4.) By that speech, h become the god of the world; and passion is itself an idolatry.

Of all the wounds which sin has infli on our hearts, this is the deepest, the r rankling, and most difficult to be cu

It is the first source whence sin proceeds, and the last to be dried up. Other passions, says St. Austin, are only to be dreaded in actions which are evil, but this is so much the more pernicious as it insinuates itself imperceptibly into the best actions and most virtuous exercises. And this evil is so great, according to the same Father, that God frequently permits his elect to fall into the greatest sins in order that he may cure them of it, and that their safety may be secure in a more profound humility. David, in the old law, and the two principal apostles in the new, are examples of this: of which examples we ought never to lose sight.

Man was born for greatness and for glory: but he is not allowed to seek these either in himself or in any created thing. There he will only meet with his own vileness and degradation. He was created to enjoy eternal glory, and in God alone must he

seek it, and there alone will he find it.
may be great upon the earth; he ma
held in honour, if his birth and rank pro
him that, but the gospel forbids hi
dwell with complacency in them, as if t
were to be the accomplishment of his wi
He must raise himself above all this g
ness which is human, and direct his a
tion to grandeurs that are eternal. At t
he cannot arrive but by a perfect hum
which places him, in the internal opi
of his heart, below his very inferiors.
this means his glory will be made s
Learn, says an ancient Father, to
yourself subjected to God, if you wi
be raised above the world. Man, b
nature and by his creation, is abov
that is elevated, however high, upon e
he must use all other elevations to
upon, that he may rise to that Sup
Being, the possession of whom will b
him more than all kingdoms.

3.—This is the world of which St. John speaks, (1 John, 2.) when he says, *love not the world, nor any thing that is in the world.* It is what we renounced in baptism: at that time every one of us engaged to live like Jesus Christ; in humility, in the love of poverty, of suffering, of penance, of mortification both of body and soul; in purity, obedience and charity. In a word, all of us did then promise to God to live according to the gospel, in utter opposition to the usages, the customs, the maxims and the spirit of this corrupted and corrupting world: a promise and engagement which, according to the Fathers, is a real vow, and the greatest of all vows. No promise can be more solemn; no obligation can be more binding, more inviolable. We have promised before God and his Church, before the sacred altars in presence of priests and angels, to renounce satan, his works and his pomps (Eph. 6.); that is to

say: to renounce the prince of the
to renounce sin, whence all the cor
of the world proceeds; to renoun
empty display of riches, vanities
versions, in which all the pomps
lights of the world consist.

To live then according to the wo
follow its maxims and its spirit;
to conform one's self to its customs
direction, is to abandon the promis
at our baptism, and the grace w
received: and in order to lead
Christian life, no surer rule can be
than to adopt the very reverse of al
in our sentiments, our determinatio
our conduct. To a true servant of
ought to be enough to excite his su
and contempt of any object, for him t
that the same is beloved and adm
the world. And since *the world lo*
thing but what is its own, (St. Joh
it cannot be any recommendation

Christian to be approved of by the world. While evil sways the multitude, that which is good is known and loved only by few. *Christians ought by faith to be victorious over the world and hold it under their feet,* (1 John, 5.) since Jesus Christ their leader has conquered it. Can then the approbation of the world, its praises and its contempts, its threats and its promises, be thought deserving of consideration?

We must, with St. Paul, be crucified to the world, and the world must be crucified to us. It deserves not from us any more regard than does a criminal suspended on the gibbet. St. James speaks of *those souls as guilty of adultery, who love the world and desire to be loved by it,* (St. James, 4.) and he regards that man as God's enemy who desires to be the world's friend. God is the true spouse of our souls: he loves us with a jealous love: he will possess our souls without a partner; and we cannot give

ourselves up to the love of the world w
out abandoning this sovereign good.

A Christian can no more be the husb
of two spouses than he can be the servan
two masters. The love of the world ma
us slaves of the world, and the love of
makes him master of our heart. Ther
not room in the heart for two lovers
contrary: one must necessarily des
the other. The whole world, accordin
St. John, (1 John, 5.) *is plunged in*
and is under the dominion of the evil spi
for which reason Jesus calls him the pri
of the world: and St. Paul calls h
"the god of the world." Whence we m
infer, that whosoever fashions his life
the maxims and customs of the world,
prey to corruption, and under the tyra
of the wicked spirit: and that we ca
lead a pure life, nor vindicate ourse
from the slavery of the devil, but by s
rating ourselves from the world, at l
in heart and in behaviour.

The Son of God is not of this world (St. John, 8.); in choosing his disciples, he separated them from the world: *the world hated them, because they belonged not to it, any more than he their master,* (ibid, 15.) The pharisees, on the contrary, those rigid observers of the law, were of the world: and it was of them that Jesus predicted that *they would die in their sins,* (ibid, 8.) The death of man is generally like unto his life; and the world remains the world until the last. For the world our Redeemer does not pray, because he knows that it must die, in its obstinate opposition to the gospel. Whoever therefore desires to be a partaker of Christ, and to live and die piously, is absolutely obliged to renounce the spirit of the world; its manners, its customs, and its passions. Every thing belongs to this Divine Saviour: he will have all or nothing; he has given all for us; he has sacrificed all; how then

shall it be possible for us to refuse h
any part of ourselves, and not be guilty
injustice and ingratitude?

" Pray to God that he will be pleased
" extinguish in your hearts the spirit a
" the love of the world, and to prese
" you pure and undefiled from its corr
" tions," (St. James, I.)

Woe to the world, because of the sc
dals and dangers with which it abou
(Matth. 18.)

Whoever connects himself with thi
that will perish, must expect also to pe
with them, (St. Aug.)

Fifteenth Day.

OF HUMAN RESPECTS.

1.—EVER since the corruption of our nature, there is nothing which man seeks to procure for himself with so much ardour, as to occupy an honourable place in the opinions of other men. He wishes to have their approbation in whatever he does, cost what it may. This is the great spring, which puts in motion all his passions; and there are very few of his actions but what partake of this motive. He is of extreme sensibility in these matters, and he cannot bear to find himself condemned, especially by those whom he looks up to, and by those whose judgment is apt to serve as a guide to most others, without feeling a secret mortification. Skilful to remark what it is that pleases and displeases those who are

witnesses of his conduct, he studies by a thousand ways to procure himself their esteem and approbation: he manifests his regard for those around him by numberless attentions; particularly for those with whom he lives in habits of intimacy, and he stands much more in awe of *their* judgment than of that of God himself.

This is the rule by which a great many people are guided: and what is to be deplored, it is often the rule of those who outwardly profess to live more regularly than others: this is what is called human respect. Self-love is its foundation; and it does all that for man, which charity does for God. It is this secret inclination which leads a man to follow the example of the many; the example of the learned; of persons distinguished by their rank or merit; of those upon whom he depends, and of those from whom he expects to receive something. Hence originates that conti-

d study to please; to accommodate
s self to those one meets; to flatter; to
rove of every thing; to go along with
crowd. A dangerous temptation for
se, who endeavour to secure their salva-
n in the middle of the world; who have
ive in companies where God is not
wn; where there is not taste for true
y; where the spirit of the world predo-
nates, although cloaked in the appear-
es of devotion.

Whence comes it that frequently we omit
most essential duties? That we neg-
to perform the good works of our
ing? That we permit our plans of piety
e overruled and frustrated? It is be-
se we stand in awe of that, "*What will
say?*" We are ashamed of appearing
gular. And how can we escape appear-
singular, if we will be determined to
our duty, in the middle of such a disor-
ly world? We would willingly be

earnest in the business of salvation; we are not willing for its sake to exp ourselves to censure. In order to s ourselves, we must not mask oursel we must declare openly for solid virt and the truths of the gospel. But we s stand alone in the cause, or we shall approved of by very few: and this i that we cannot endure. In fine, we k diligently before our eyes the judgm of men, and regard not those of God: to see how the generality of men act, must infer, that they have every thin hope for from the world, and nothing f God; that the world is their god and t judge: and that God himself in no occupies himself with their concerns.

This it is, which renders of no avai many good desires and resolutions; th is, which extinguishes the inspiration grace; which destroys the fruit of all g works; which causes men to forget

they owe to God; to Jesus Christ; to the church; to truth; to justice. There is nothing more absolutely condemned in the sacred writings than this unworthy proceeding. God, says the prophet (Ps. 53.), breaks the bones of those who seek to please men; he contemns them; he overwhelms them with confusion. St. Paul says (Gal. 1.), *that he would not believe himself to be a servant of God, if he sought still to please men.* The Son of God threatens that he will be ashamed at the last day of those, who shall have been ashamed of him, and of his word, before men, (St. Luke, 9.) And as they have not dared to acknowledge him publicly for their master, so neither will he acknowledge them for his disciples. In fine, the cowardly are thrown together with fornicators and murderers into the pool of fire and brimstone, (Apoc. 21.)

2.—Nobody is ashamed of his profession, however low or despised it may be. There is no employment or calling whatever, but men shall be found willing to follow it, without regard to men's opinion, so long as there is something to be gained by it. Shall the Christian only blush at his profession, honourable as it is, and so productive of blessing? Shall it be the Christian alone, who shall be loath to appear what he is; and to speak, to live, to act as a child of God? Men are deterred from declaring themselves for him, out of fear of being no longer esteemed by the world; out of fear of displeasing the world, and of becoming the object of its censures. It must then be admitted as unquestionable, that God and the world, being put in comparison, the preference is given to the latter; it is unquestionable, that God is held not worthy to be preferred to the world; that he is treated as not being

possessed of the power to support his friends against the hatred and attacks of the world. Can there be any thing more criminal? Any thing against God more injurious? There are who say, "We regard the world as an object deserving contempt, as being already condemned:" for I now speak of those who take some credit to themselves for piety: and yet they seek its approbation, and its advantages, at the expence of whatever is due to their God and their Creator! What indignity!

But if we perish, will the world save us? If we be condemned by God, will the world reprieve us? and if he be disposed to save us, will the world be able to obstruct his designs? Is there any greater folly possible, than thus to prefer the judgements of weak men, impotent, blind, deluded men, to the judgement of him who is wisdom and omnipotence itself?

To stand so much in fear of men, who can have no power to hurt any but those who are willing to become their slaves; men, who cause greater mischief to each other, than to those with whom they are at variance: and at the same time to fear so little him, who penetrates into all the intricate foldings of their consciences; him, from whom nothing can remain hidden; him, who has it in his power to destroy body and soul, and plunge both the one and the other into hell.

Surely those, who thus are slaves to human opinion, must imagine that virtue is in some manner or other disgraceful, and dishonourable to those who make profession of it; and on the other hand, that vice is worthy of honour and esteem. It is the direct way to render the latter every where triumphant, and to compel virtue to hide itself and disappear. Presently we shall see virtue bear the name of vice, and

vice the name of virtue: virtue experience punishment, and vice meet with reward. So strange a perversion of things must bring perdition to the soul: and yet to this perversion does this all-prevailing regard for the world necessarily lead; this mean timidity which so much stands in awe of "*What will people say.*"

3.—What! shall it then come to this, that the service of God shall make us blush, and only that of the devil stimulate our ambition? We shudder at the expression; still are we not ashamed to live and act as if such were our sentiments: to bear about us a scrupulous circumspection lest we incur an unfavourable sentence from this corrupted world. The truly Christian soul, on the other hand, places its prudence in availing itself of the propitious opportunities which God places in its way; in executing in all things his orders and his

in all ages, and in all situations? Unaccountable proceeding! Man feels no shame in being known to be a sinner; while to live without reproach causes him to blush. Can we be ignorant of what the apostle says, (Rom. 2. 7.) that "*Glory, honour and peace shall be the portion of every man, who acts well?*" and that his actions must be seen not only by God, but also by men. Jesus Christ requires that our light be made to shine before men: that *seeing our good works, they may glorify your father, who is in heaven,* (St. Matthew, 5.) To be deterred from doing our duty through fear of being despised, is to be deprived of the light which ought to illuminate us, and to deprive God of the glory which ought to redound to him.

Is it from man that we look for approbation? (Gal. 1.) Is man's pleasure the end which we propose to ourselves? So to act would not longer be acting well; it

would be a criminal vanity; it would be to lose the fruit of all our labours, and to lose ourselves. If, according to St. Paul, we cannot be servants of Jesus Christ so long as we are desirous of pleasing men, can any one persuade himself that he is one of his servants when the fear of men exercises so much influence over him? And if he is not one of his servants, from whom does he look to receive salvation and reward for his good works? He who is not a servant of Jesus Christ, can be no other's servant but the devil's: and this is what man ought to be ashamed of. What a reproach, what groveling meanness, to live under the servitude of the devil, merely through dread of this world's displeasure! Ah! it is the pleasing the world which we ought to dread: for, *please the world we cannot without displeasing Jesus Christ*, (St. Paulinus.)

Assume for your devise: "*The Lord is "my judge, from him do I look for com- "mendation; from him my retribution,*" (1. Cor. 4.)

I am not ashamed of the gospel, (Rom. 1.)

I account it as very little to be judged by you, or by any man.

Sixteenth Day.

OF SELF-DIFFIDENCE.

1.—MAN, since the fall of Adam, beset with weakness on every side, corrupted in his flesh, deprived of light in his interior, inclined to evil by the bent of his will, *possesses not any thing*, according to the Councils of the Church (2. Con. Orange),

which he can call his own, except lying and sin: and for this reason he is under the necessity of mistrusting his own light and his own strength. For his light is frequently nothing but darkness; and his strength nothing more than presumption and pride. For which reason the scripture says, (Prov. 14.) "*That the wise man is fearful and declines from evil; but the fool rushes on when he is in danger, and believes himself in security.*" The reason is, because the wise man, knowing himself, knows from whence his help must come, and he is therefore circumspect; whereas the fool is self-sufficient in his blindness, and fearless in his temerity.

Man, according to the apostle, is never more strong, than when he is fully aware of his weakness: because it is then that he has recourse to God, who is the whole of his strength: and it is in this consciousness of his own weakness that the power

of God manifests itself the more, and that his virtue is rendered perfect. Of this the apostle himself is a great example (2. Cor. 12.): full of an humble diffidence in himself, when importuned by temptation, he addresses himself to God in frequent prayer; and he receives this consoling answer, *My grace is sufficient for thee:* it will support thee against all thy weaknesses. An important lesson for us, to teach us not to confide in ourselves at all, but to place our entire dependance on Jesus Christ. *He is our whole force; our wisdom; our justice; our sanctification, and our redemption* (1. Cor. 1.); and *from this plenitude is derived all that we possess;* (John, 1.) in order that *he who glories, as it is written,* (Jer. 9.) *may not glory but in the Lord. All have sinned,* says St. Paul, (Romans, 3.) and man has nothing wherein to glorify himself in the sight of God.

There is no just man upon earth, but he who is justified by the grace of Jesus Christ. There is no man gifted with understanding, no man desirous of seeking God, but he whom God has first sought out. Every man who is led by his inclinations alone, wanders from the right road. He becomes incapable of any thing good; for there is no one who acts well by his own power. All their labours, says Isaiah, (Isa. 59.) are unprofitable labours; the work of their hands is the work of iniquity, and their thoughts are thoughts of injustice. The spirit of man, and all the thoughts of his heart, are prone to evil from his youth (Gen. 6. and 8.): and if things are so according to the divine oracles, what can be more rash, what more criminal, than to reckon upon our own strength as we do, and on our wisdom, as if all things were to be found within ourselves, and the assistance of God not necessary?

2.—The cedars have fallen; what then have not reeds to fear? Who will venture to think himself stronger than Sampson; more holy than David; wiser than Solomon? The chief of the apostles suspected not his weakness, and a fatal experience convinced him of it. He exposed himself without fear to danger, and he renounced his master. If we imitate him in his presumption, like him we shall also fall. Dreadful example of human infirmity! And unless we use all care and precaution, we have reason to tremble and be alarmed, lest the same thing befall us also. Let us ever have before our eyes our own miseries; let us ever keep ourselves in humble dependance on Jesus Christ; let us address him in prayer frequently; from him alone let us look for the grace necessary to escape danger, to surmount temptation; to live, to suffer, and to die like him. Left to ourselves, and unassisted by him, we have

nothing to look forward to but relapses and infidelities.

But, what is particularly deplorable, man's presumption is still greater than his weakness. And, with such a disposition, of what is he capable? St. Peter thinks himself capable of every thing, notwithstanding all his master said to him; and he experiences, by a lamentable fall, the truth of what had been told him: *that he could not yet follow him so as to die for him.* (John 13. 36.) On the other hand, St. Paul says, that he can do all things in him who strengthens him; and he is faithful to Jesus Christ in the greatest emergencies; because he so speaks in the full conviction of his own weakness, and of the power of God who acts in him, and who enables him to surmount all obstacles and all temptations. Even when our charity shall be equal to St. Paul's, it will be a treasure which we shall carry in earthly

vessels: let us not trust to the fragility of the vessel; and let us pray to the worker who made it, not to permit it to fall from his hand, lest it be broken, and we be despoiled of the treasure which it contained.

3.—Jesus Christ himself, when prostrate in the garden of Olives, before the face of his Father, previous to his being delivered up to death, teaches us by his example how we are to behave in danger and temptation. He is the all-powerful virtue of God, and yet he fears: he trembles at the approach of death: it is only by earnest prayer that he encourages himself. After this, shall man, who is weakness itself, confide in any strength that he calls his own? St. Peter believed himself strong enough to undergo death, and he is not able to bear the voice of a maid servant. On the contrary, the Saviour of the world

acts as if he were the weakest of men, and at death he exhibits an invincible strength. The reason is, because St. Peter asks not by humble prayer the strength he stands in need of; and the Saviour of the world, who has all things in himself, petitions, as if he stood in need of all things: and this, that he may teach us, after taking upon himself our weaknesses, that real strength consists not in the opinion of our having it in us, as from ourselves, but in the gratuitous assistance of the Almighty.

A Christian then, when he perceives himself attacked, and in danger of taking some wrong step, has nothing to do but to place all his confidence in humility; in a distrust of himself, and in a perfect confidence in God; in prayer; in flight; in those wise precautions, which the saints in all ages have been known to make use of. For our instruction, the Son of God chose sometimes to retire, in order to avoid the

effects of the hatred and animosities of men, in like manner, as he orders us also to do, when no essential nor more important duty puts impediment. Thus the saints, in the first ages of the church, fled from persecution, when no particular command from God forbad them to quit their abodes, and when the claims of charity required not otherwise. Hence the church condemned those, who rashly advanced before the enemies of religion, and who presented themselves before tyrants uncompelled; and she has forbidden them to be honoured after death among the martyrs. For the same reason, an infinite number of the faithful of all ages, of both sexes, of every condition, have fled from the world, and retired to deserts to seek a hiding place.

"Be then fully persuaded, that with-
"out Jesus Christ you can do nothing,

"(John, 15.) That it is God who works "in you both the will and the act, accord- "ing as he pleases, (Phil. 2.) Pray to him "without ceasing, that he abandon you "not to yourself; and that he permit you "not to yield to temptation. Above all "things, avoid the occasions, and remem- "ber that frequently the most dangerous "are those where you see not danger (St. "Jerome); and that the more you trust to "your fancied security, the more reason you "have to dread the snares which lie con- "cealed." (St. Leo.)

Confide not in your own prudence, nor in your own understanding. *Fear God, and depart from evil,* (Prov. 8.) *Let him who thinketh himself to stand, take heed lest he fall,* (1 Cor. 10.)

Call upon God continually, and say, *Lord save us, we perish.*

Seventeenth Day.

ON THE USE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

1.—THE Jewish people had their sacraments, and the Christians have theirs. But those of the Jews were no more than signs and figures of the Redeemer, whom God had promised to man. Whereas ours are signs of that Redeemer having come; and are means which he makes use of to apply to us the fruits of his death, and to infuse his grace into our hearts. The sacraments of the old law exist no longer, because the mysteries, of which they were only the predictions, have been accomplished; and Jesus Christ, whose coming they prefigured, has come, and has brought us the reality, of which they were no more than the shadow. They produced of themselves nothing more than an exterior, a

legal purity: but Jesus has revealed to us the justice which comes by faith, and which sanctifies us interiorly by love. At present, the children of God are called to a state of liberty: they are no longer subjected to the sacraments, the ceremonies, the precepts of the old law; which were suited only to a people stiff-necked and carnal as were the Jews. Christians are freed from this severe slavery. The number of the sacraments given to us by Jesus Christ is but small, (St. Austin contra Faust. 6. 13.) He has not instituted more than seven in his church: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders and Matrimony. But although they are not considerable in their number, yet in their virtue and efficacy, in the admirable fruits they produce, and their facility in application, they far surpass those of the ancient law. It is by means of these sacraments, as speaks the Council of Trent,

that all true justice first begins to form itself in the heart of man: by them it acquires increase and perfection; by them it is recovered after being lost. It is from the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ that they draw all their force and efficacy.

The sacraments would not produce such grand effects, did not the order and the will of God attach to them the operations of his grace. It is he himself who acts and who sanctifies the soul by the application and use which we make of these sacred signs. They produce their effects with infallible certainty in those souls, which, by being in proper dispositions, oppose no obstacle. This by no means depends on the sanctity of him who administers them: still, the more holy the minister is, the more fit he will be to obtain the graces and aids necessary to those who address themselves to him. It in no wise depends upon the science of the minister; still, in order

that he may administer with advantage, science and discernment are necessary for him. A well informed minister, will enlighten souls, and make them understand the greatness and virtue of the sacraments. A good man can do much by his prayers and good example. Holy things acquire in his hands a more strong impression, and produce an increased effect. In a word, when a minister of the church is neither learned nor virtuous, there is reason to fear that the sacraments, being unduly applied, and given to those who are not worthy, are changed into instruments of death.

2.—Our evil dispositions prevent the effects of the sacraments; render them unavailing, and the reception of them a profanation. Their work, when efficacious, is our sanctification; but they suppose in us certain dispositions, without which their effect is null. *Of what advantage to us,*

says St. Austin, (Quest. 84 super I
ticum) *are the sacraments conferred vis*
if grace invisible sanctify us not interio
They produce no sanctification to him
despises them: and it is no other
despising them, to receive them wi
heart attached to sin, and full of the
of the world; so opposite to the love
grace of God.

The sacraments, says the same
Father, in another place, (Lib. contr. C
centium, cap. 1.) *may be received bot*
the good and the bad: but to the b
they are the more unavailing, and the
they bring increase of guilt, in propor
as they are in their nature more holy.
what is in itself good, cannot produce a
effect when received ill! (In Ps. 142.)
The good and the bad, both the one
the other, receive them; but the one to
sanctification, the other to their con
nation, (Ep. ad Cath. contr. Donatisto

One confession and one communion well made, would be sufficient to sanctify us: and yet how many confessions and how few conversions! how many communions and how few Christians whose lives are conformable to the holy gospels! In the sacrament of penance, we ought to receive the impression of the death of Christ in our souls, that so sin may die in us; and yet, we see the sacraments received, and sin live as before. Is it not evident that sin, which was the cause of Jesus dying on the cross, is still the cause of him dying every day in those who thus abuse this sacrament? For one of two things must take place; either that Jesus must cause death to sin, or sin cause death to Jesus: which sin indeed does, by destroying in us the fruits of that death, which he suffered for us.

It is the declaration of the apostle, (1 Cor. 11.) that *he who eats the body of Jesus, and drinks his blood, shews forth his*

death. This he does, according to St. Basil, by dying to himself, to the world, and to his criminal passions. When then, after having received this great sacrament, a person is still full of himself, of the world, and of his inordinate desires, such a one makes it manifest, according to the same apostle, that he has rendered himself guilty of his body and blood, which he has eaten to his condemnation: for the Son of God enters as a Saviour into those, who receive him in a manner worthy of him; and he enters as a judge into those who receive him unworthily. Into the one he enters to sanctify, into the other to condemn. What can be more terrible for those who approach to the sacraments with so little precaution, so little preparation, so little investigation.

3.—Balthasar, king of Babylon, profaned only the *vessels* of the temple of Jerusalem,

and dreadful was the punishment which God inflicted on him. Those vessels were no more than simple figures: and our sacraments are infinitely more holy. *To how much greater punishment then,* cries out St. Paul, (Heb. 10.) *do you not think that person will be condemned,* who shall have trampled under foot the Son of God: who shall have regarded as vile and of no worth the Lord of the Covenant by whom he had been sanctified: who shall have offered insult to the spirit of grace; a proceeding of which those persons are guilty, who receive the sacraments, and yet change not their lives and conduct.

Let us then learn to consider what is the virtue of the sacraments; what the esteem in which we are to hold them; what the faith, the humility, the purity, the caution with which we are to approach to them, if we desire to find in them our salvation, and not our condemnation; the care and

fidelity necessary to cherish, treasure up and augment their grace and efficacy. The only purpose of their institution is to sanctify us; let us then be holy in our dispositions, before we receive them; and after having received them, let us be still more holy by the sentiments and affections of our hearts, in our manners, and the whole conduct of our lives. It is strange that after a length of ten and twenty years we are not advanced farther on the road to heaven: that we are neither more disinterested, nor more humble, nor more patient, nor more charitable, than at first: that after so many confessions and communions we are not at all the less attached to our own opinion and our own will, nor less interested, nor less sensual, nor less devoted to the world. Either we cannot have received the grace of the sacraments, or we have culpably despoiled ourselves of it. This is because we do not prepare our-

selves as we ought to do, before we receive them; or, because, after receiving them, we do not live in due vigilance and recollection.

Return thanks to God for having given to you the sacraments for sources of grace and salvation. Lament the negligence with which you have approached them; the little care you have taken to draw from these sources, and to preserve the graces derived from them. Examine yourselves seriously as to the abuse you have made of them: make yourselves sensible, whence the cause arose, and fail not to remedy it. Adopt every precaution for the future, that you approach not to them but with dispositions such as belong to things so sacred. Perform this important action in such manner, as if you were to die immediately after performing it.

"*Remember these excellent words: Holy things are but for holy people,*" (Liturgy);

" *give not the holy things to dogs, and cast* " *not your pearls to swine,*" (Matth. 7.)

Blessed are they who wash their robes in the blood of the lamb; that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may receive the fruits of it, which are the sacraments, (Apoc. 22.)

Let us turn out from among us the dogs which swallow up again their own vomit; the unchaste, the murderers, and all who love and are guilty of lying.

There are Christians who bear the name of being faithful and are not so: these are the persons who profane the sacraments of Jesus Christ.

Eighteenth Day.

OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

I.—A SACRIFICE is an act of religion, by which a victim is immolated to God, whether it be done by destroying it utterly, or by changing it from one thing into another; and in which, at the same time, annihilating one's self in his presence by emotions of love, we adore him as the author and principle of our existence, and of every thing which we possess: we acknowledge the sovereign empire which he holds over his creatures; and we protest that we are ready to offer to him the sacrifice of our lives and of our goods, whenever he shall be pleased to demand them of us. Such an act has ever been regarded as the greatest and most excellent homage that can possibly be rendered unto

God; but at the same time a homage which, by all nations, has ever been considered to belong only to the godhead.

The victims which were offered to God in the old law were no more than animals or fruits of the earth; in the new law we possess a victim infinitely more excellent, and one of which those others were no more than mere figures: this is Jesus Christ himself, God and man at one and the same time: who immolated himself for us to his Father upon the cross, by a bloody death, and who has left us in the church this same sacrifice of his body and his blood to be offered for us to the end of the world. This is what is done every day in the mass, in which the sacrifice of the cross is continued, renewed and represented without effusion of blood. There his body is present under the appearance of bread, and his blood under the symbols of wine: his death is pointed out by the separation of

sacred symbols: he is there offered
r and entirely, and he offers himself
hands of the priest and of the faith-
o are present, who also offer them-
along with him at the same time.
s, in the blessed mass, the sacrifice
selves ought to make a part of his
ce; because he there offers himself
crifices himself, together with all his
ers, and with his whole church; and
e the church offers itself also, at the
ime with him. He is the high priest
fers the sacrifice, and he is also the
offered; and the church and the
l may be said to be ministering as-
s, offering Jesus Christ, and them-
also in him, through him, and with
y the hands of the priests his minis-
These are high things: but they also
e on our parts exalted dispositions,
mean to draw profit from them and
profane them. In order to offer Jesus

Christ in a proper manner, and to offer ourselves with him worthily, we ought to be incorporated with him: to be a living member of his body; to have our mind fashioned according to his; to live the same life as he lived. In order to sacrifice ourselves truly with him, we ought to be dead to the world and to ourselves. The victim cannot be sacrificed but by death, but by being destroyed. We must be ever ready to give up for Jesus our possessions, our health, our very life, whenever it shall be necessary for the defence of his gospel, the defence of innocence, truth or justice. In a word, we must place in his hands our body, our soul; all we have, and all we are, that he may offer us wholly to his father in this great sacrifice: and we must lead such a life as shall not at all derogate from an act so holy.

2.—Here Jesus Christ annihilates himself, that he may become a victim to

Father, and our attendance at this great sacrifice must be in the same spirit and in the same disposition. He offers himself that he may adore him; that he may testify to him his love; that he may render him thanks for his gifts; that he may ask him pardon for our sins, and may ask for the graces we stand in need of. This also we must do with true faith; with a pure heart, a contrite and penitent soul, a respectful frame full of humility and modesty; with all internal attention, and with all the religious piety we are capable of.

Thus must we assist at the holy sacrifice of the mass, in order to enter as we ought into the intentions of the church. She certainly does not mean that her children should perform so holy an act as the Jews used to assist at their sacrifices, and be present only bodily. Bodily the stones of the building are present. As we are obliged to adore God, and to sacrifice

to him in spirit and in truth, the church enjoins that we also assist at this great sacrifice in spirit and truth. Can any one suppose, with any semblance of reason, that this spouse of the Son of God would command the observance of *the letter which kills*, (2 Cor. 3.) and not *the spirit which giveth life?* Doubtless not. Her intention is not that we honour God with our lips only, while our heart is far from him. That would be to revive judaism in the middle of the church of Christ, and furnish authority for hypocrisy. Whenever the church imposes on us any exercises of our religion, she recommends to us *to do them as true children of God*, (Rom. 8.) Now the children of God are guided and urged on in all their actions by the spirit of God; and whoever is destitute of that spirit, and not moved by it, ranks not in the number. In a word, the church in all the commandments which she gives to her children,

poses always the observance of *the first and greatest of all the commandments of God, which is that of charity,* (1. Tim. 1.) Wherefore charity must be the soul of our actions; the end of all precept, and, according to St. Paul, *the fulfilment of the whole law,* (Rom. 13.) *In all, whatsoever we do, we must be actuated by charity,* (1. Cor. 16.)

As to the manner of hearing mass, the best and most profitable, without doubt, is to join ourselves to the priest in heart and mind, and to follow him with attention in what he says and what he does; to recite the same prayers with devotion; to ask pardon of God at the time the priest asks pardon of him for us; and when he offers Jesus Christ to his Father, to make also the same offering. The mass is a representation of the sacrifice of the cross; the self-same virtue is there present upon the

altar; the same sacrifice, offered on the cross in a bloody manner, and in the mass in a manner unbloody. The best method then to assist at it, is to have our thoughts occupied with this death and passion of Jesus Christ: and he that wishes to receive the fruits of this death and passion, must shew them forth and exhibit them himself in the sentiments of penance and a mortified life.

It is a banquet at which we must nourish ourselves with the victim that is sacrificed: wherefore we must in no wise neglect to communicate; since it is by communicating, that is, by the union which ought to take place between us and Jesus Christ, that we receive the fruits of it: whether it be that we communicate not otherwise than by a lively and ardent faith, by which the person offered is rendered present to us, as if we saw him; unites us to himself by the affections of our heart, and causes

us to enter into his sentiments and his dispositions: a communion which, though only spiritual, is not less real, and does not fail to produce in the soul great effects: for God is a spirit, and he wishes to be served and adored in spirit. Or, whether we communicate by the reception of the sacraments, being in a state to do it, and feeling the dispositions, which the gospel requires; which are, to shew forth the death of Christ by dying to ourselves, to sin, to our passions and to the world: to live by the spirit of Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ; to dwell in him and be his dwelling place, by a constant ascendancy of love, and by an active charity towards our neighbour: to try ourselves, according to St. Paul, by a life of penance, and by a fidelity which shall be proof against the ordinary temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil: to have a sincere desire to be nourished by Jesus Christ, and by his

Nineteenth Day.

OF THE USE WE OUGHT TO MAKE OF GRACE.

1.—GRACE is an impression which the spirit of God makes upon our souls, by the light which he produces in them; and on our hearts, by the love which he inspires. According to St. Austin, it is the inspiration of a holy love, which causes us to regard as agreeable and perform with pleasure what God commands, and to shun with horror all that he forbids. It draws off the soul from the love of herself, and takes her from creatures, and it gives her an inclination and affection for God; who is her sovereign good. By this divine grace, the God of heaven becomes the God of our hearts, and our inheritance: by it we become disgusted with the amusements

of the age, and acquire a taste for the things of heaven. Grace illumines the soul; warms the will, and imparts to it a holy earnestness for the duties of piety, and establishes the soul in a state of justification. It extricates the soul of man from the fetters of sin, being as necessary to a good life as respiration is to sustain the life of the body: it heals the diseases and the wounds which sin had inflicted on our nature: it imparts strength against natural weaknesses: it elevates our nature above itself, and enables a man to act for God, and to work his salvation by the practice of good works, and Christian virtues.

Every grace which calls man back to his God is a pure gift of his mercy: it has been merited for us by Jesus Christ: we are neither to ask for it, nor can we receive it but in his name. We cannot merit it; and God does not give it but through him.

It is to be obtained by prayer; and this prayer consists more in the desires and groanings of the heart than in words, which are nothing more than signs. We must ask for it without ceasing, because it is necessary at all times and in every emergency: and this must be done with faith, with humility, with earnestness, even to importunity. It must be waited for with firm hope; be preserved with great fidelity, and be enlarged by an ardour ever eager to do good. Every thing must be avoided which has a tendency to sin: for sin causes it to be lost, and renders man unworthy to re-obtain it after losing it.

There is nothing so valuable as grace; nothing so easily lost; nothing so difficult to recover when once it has been lost. We have reason to fear, says St. Bernard, when we have it, because we may lose it; fear when we have lost it, lest it return not; fear still more, after receiving it a second

time, because if we lose it again we shall be doubly culpable, and our latter state will become worse than the former.

2. To neglect one good thought, which inspires us to abandon evil, and to do what our office obliges us to, is to render unprofitable one of the fruits of our Lord's death. The smallest grace we can receive has cost his blood; has been procured to us by his sufferings. Those who do not correspond with the graces of God; who receive them in vain; who let the occasions favourable to salvation escape without profiting of them; who seek not to procure the means of drawing down upon themselves the blessings of heaven; who, through temerity or the impetuosity of some favourite passion, expose themselves to the danger of losing them, or by ingratitude prevent them from working to effect, will, when presented before the judgement seat of

God, have a woeful account to ren
all which Jesus has done, and all
he has suffered for them, during his
life; and of all which he has done fo
sanctification since his resurrection,
in his church, and in heaven, seated
right hand of his Father. Nothing c
more dreadful than the judgement
unprofitable servant. All the accus
brought against him was, that he di
put to profit the talents of his Lord.
condemnation was to be cast out into
rior darkness. The unjust steward
turned out of his office, and the adm
tration of his master's property was
from him, because he was accuse
having dissipated it. Those who n
to profit of the graces of God, and
who deprive themselves of them th
want of co-operation, cannot look fo
other lot than this of the servant an
steward. And if God demands an ac

an idle word, what ought we not to
pprehend for so many graces, so many
ghts, so many sacraments, which, by a
e of amusement and dissipation, we have
ndered unprofitable.

Grace is the greatest of all possessions:
e least loss of grace that man can sustain
of greater detriment than the loss of all
he treasures of the world. And as it can-
not happen but through man's own fault,
he deserves a punishment proportionate to
his negligence. One inspiration neglected
would have procured for us, had we cor-
responded faithfully with it, a continuance
and a chain of graces, which at length
would have obtained the grace of final per-
severance in good; and would have caused
us to advance step by step to the term of
our eternal predestination. It is the loss
and the wrong use we made of the first
grace, which breaks the chain, and which
is the first cause of our misfortune. An

illumination of mind extinguished, a good suggestion smothered in the heart, deserves the privation of a greater grace, which would have caused us to avoid the danger of sinning mortally, and would have supported us against the temptation: and the consequence of such privation is our fall and the loss of our soul. There is nothing more important for our salvation than this advice of the apostle, (Heb. 12.) *Take heed that no one be wanting to the grace of God;* and that no noxious root nor shooting weeds of any concupiscence choke the good seed, and infect the souls of many.

3.—To-day, if you shall hear the voice of the Lord, says the same apostle, harden not your hearts. What a length of time has not God waited for us, soliciting us, moving us intimately in our hearts, and threatening to take away our candlestick from its place and to give our portion to

another, (Apoc. 2.) and yet we remain insensible. What ingratitude! Do we not collect that there is, according to the scripture, a measure of graces and of sins: after which we deserve that God withdraw himself from us, and abandon us to our own darkness and corruption. Of all the sins man commits, there is none which God punishes in a more terrible manner, and which he pardons less, than the abuse of his graces, and that ingratitude which is both the cause and the effect of that abuse.

This is the crime for which Jesus Christ so severely reproaches the cities of Corazain, Bethsaida and Capharnaum, (Matth. 11. and Luke, 10.) where he had wrought such great wonders and distributed so many graces: by this they became more criminal, in the judgement of God, than the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, so noted for their abominations: and hence

we may conclude that those Christians, who shall abuse graces infinitely greater, will be much more criminal than those ungrateful and incredulous Jews; and that the misery of such will be so great, as to have no equal, (Luke, 2.) The terrible disasters which befel Jerusalem, for having rejected him, whom for so many ages they had been expecting, and for having resisted the light of his gospel, are but a slight sketch of the miseries with which he will overwhelm ungrateful Christians throughout all eternity.

Who must not tremble in hearing this menace which God holds out, by the mouth of St. Paul, against those who have not loved the truth when revealed to them; which is, to send them a spirit of error so gross, that they shall believe in lies; and that at the last day he will come from the midst of flames to avenge himself on those who do not obey his gospel, (2 Thess. 2.)

e who reject the light of the gospel,
t is announced to them, be treated
uch rigour, much more have those
s to apprehend, who remain not firm
truth, having once embraced it:
ccording to the words of St. Peter,
r, 2.) *turn and go back, after having*
the way of holiness and justice:
bandon the blessed law which has
iven to them; who, according to
ul, (2. Tim. 4.) *not being able to*
sound doctrine, have recourse to a
ıde of teachers obsequious to their
, and prompt to flatter them accord-
the maxims of complaisance and
respect.

der then your life in such manner
t to have received the grace of God
in, (2. Cor. 6.) *Behold now is the*
table time, the day of salvation. Go
present yourselves with an humble

" confidence before the throne of grace,
" you may receive mercy and find a
" your necessities," (Heb. 4.)

Let us observe diligently the things w
we have heard, that we may not be
vessels half closed, which retain not
which is put into them, (Heb. 2.)

Say, with the royal prophet, (Ps.
My soul, bless the Lord, and never fo
what he has done for thee!

Twentieth Day.

ON THE USE OF TIME.

1.—ANGELS sinned, and God allo
them not an instant for repentance: 2
sinned, and God might in all justice h

treated him with equal rigour. Nevertheless, his goodness suspended the effects of his vengeance in his regard; and he conceded to him the whole of the time of this life, for the purpose of doing penance and satisfying his justice. The time of the present life is then for him, according to the saying of the apostle, "*The acceptable time, the day of salvation.*" Nothing ought to be more precious to him; and yet there is nothing which he neglects more, or which he turns to so bad account. All our moments are numbered; they are in the hands of God: they depend also absolutely on him; who has given to us our being and our life. By him that life is preserved to us; by him it can be taken away whenever he pleases; and if he takes it away during the time that we defile it with sin, there is nothing else awaiting us, but a dreadful and unhappy eternity: all is lost to us; we ourselves are lost.

Our happiness then and our misc
all eternity depends upon the use
we make of time. But such is the l
ness of men, that the greatest part pr
on to the very gates of eternity wi
knowing why time is given to them.
days of salvation, months, years,
away, and nobody reflects thereon.
whole of life is consumed in amusen
in trifles, in empty diversions; in oc
tions which have no other object tha
advantages of a few days duration;
passed entirely, to use the words
certain heathen, either in doing no
or in doing evil; in doing any thin
what ought to be done. Some p
pass it in idleness, some in disorder
some in illusion: all run on head
and heedless of their ruin; mis-usin
abusing that, which of all the thin
the world is the most irreparable,
once it is lost.

In order to form an estimate of the value of time, it is important that we attend to three things—1. That the whole of the life of the Son of God, his labours, his sufferings, and death, were employed to procure for us this time, of which we are so careless. He restored it to us when forfeited, at the expense of his blood; and if we squander it away, Jesus Christ and all his mysterious benefits cease to avail us. 2. One hour of our present time, well employed, may secure us against the eternal pains which we had deserved, and may obtain for us that heavenly kingdom, of which we were wholly unworthy. 3. There is not one of the reprobate in hell to whom this hour which we lose in vain amusements, would not be preferable to all the kingdoms of the earth, if Almighty God would but grant it him to be used by him in doing penance: such a one would be willing to suffer the pains of hell for the

space of millions of years to purchase it, if it were possible! But, alas! it will never be granted to him!

2.—Indeed, one of the greatest punishments of the damned is their immortal regret for having miserably lost a time which they might have made use of to escape hell, and to gain heaven: and we find, by the scripture, that these despairing souls reckon at present the whole time of their past life to have been nothing, because they have reaped from it no advantage whatever for eternity. We were no sooner born, say they, moved by lively remorse, we were no sooner born, than we ceased to live; we have no trace of virtue to shew, and we have been consumed by wickedness! What despair at having passed so many years in sin, in the pleasures and vanities of the age; in fatiguing themselves without profit in the hard ways of iniquity; and in not

ng used one moment to think about
ning when gone astray! But, where
are, there is no resource; there is no
for them; *there are neither good works,*
eason, nor wisdom, nor science, that
render them any service towards re-
ing themselves, (Apoc. 10.) *Do there-*
quickly, says the wise man, *whatever*
hand is able to do, that thou mayst
fall into so sorrowful an extremity,
L. 9.)

hile we have time, says St. Paul,
l. 6.) *let us not think it laborious to do*
, for in due time we shall reap the
s thereof. Ah! if thou hadst known,
that in this thy day, which is allowed
ee, says Jesus Christ, weeping over
ate of Jerusalem, (Luke, 19.) *if thou*
t but known the things that were for
peace and thy safety! But now they
idden from thine eyes. A prey to the
of the world, which renders thee blind,

thou seest not the calamities that are about to fall upon thee. What our blessed Saviour spoke to this unhappy city, we may say to those souls who, in the infatuation of their passions, suffer days and months and years, even the whole of life, to pass away without reflecting for what purpose they were placed in this world; without opening their eyes on the one side to behold the many effects of the bounty and mercy of God with which they are every where surrounded, and on the other to observe the many marks of his justice and of his vengeance with which the world abounds, and with which they are threatened, if they profit not of his graces and visitations. What happened at Jerusalem is no more than a picture of them.

A time will come, continues Christ, a time of wretchedness for thee, when thine enemies shall encompass thee, &c! And why? Because thou hast not profited of

ie time of the visitation of thy God. The
emies of our soul are the Flesh, the
orld, and the Evil Spirits. Almighty
od delivers over to these tyrants those
rsons, who have not been careful to avail
mselves of the intervals of his mercy
id the days of salvation. The evils with
hich he threatened Jerusalem at length
ll upon her: she experienced the store of
rath, which she had stored up for herself
r her hardness and impenitence: and a
y will come, when those who imitate
r, will in like manner find themselves in
e possession of their enemies, and deliv-
ed over to the tyranny of the devils. The
y of misery will certainly come: *it will*
me sooner than expected (Luke, 21.);
will come suddenly and by surprise,
hilip, 3.) It will envelope, as in a net,
the inhabitants of the earth; all those
o have no taste or affection for any other
an the things of this world.

3.—*Be careful therefore,* s
tle, (Ephes. 5.) *to watch over*
with great circumspection:
thoughtless, who have no ot
their fancies, uncertain cha
passions, who give their
amusements; but like wise m
the time. To redeem any thi
suppose some expence to be
lost time is not repaired with
lence to one's self; without re
pleasures, our interests, our
predilections, our very will.
time, we must be converted;
turn to God, and satisfy his
laborious and penitential li
chase the kingdom of heav
separate ourselves from every
an obstruction. To return int
God, we must be prepared t
sacrifice.

Thus it is that we must redeem the precious remains of a life, of which the principal part has been dissipated and consumed in the wanderings and disorders of the passions, and the enchanting delights of the world. These remains of life are not to be redeemed but by many groanings and tears; by much labour, and assiduity in good: and if the remainder of life be but short, still, provided we apply ourselves to these duties with eagerness, and with faith, we shall, according to the wise man (Wisd. 4.) fill up the course of a long life: but when, instead of acknowledging his error, a man hardens himself still more and more in his sins, such a one is threatened in the scripture, (Eccl. 7. 18.) with the being taken off before his time, and by a premature death: a death, which will rob him of all that time, which he had vainly flattered himself he would be able to make use of for the exercise of penance.

"Employ therefore your time in doing "all the good that your obligations as a "Christian and the duties of your calling "require of you. Turn every moment to "profit with all earnestness: and that you "may not lose any part of it, be careful to "do all in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Join "your labours and sufferings to his; that "all may be but one sacrifice; which may "appease the anger of the Almighty, and "render him propitious. That is the me-"thod to employ your time to advantage; "to prepare yourself to die happily, and "to appear with confidence before your "judge."

Say, with Jesus Christ, (John, 9.) *I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.*

Time is short. *The figure of this world passeth away,* (1 Cor. 7.)

Twenty-First Day.

OF EXAMPLE.

1.—OF all the duties of charity, which man owes to his neighbours, there is none more indispensable, of larger extent, or more general, than to shew him such example, as may lead him to goodness and draw him from evil. Each one is bound to love his neighbour like himself: he is therefore bound to edify him by virtuous example. We stand in need of being edified ourselves; we must therefore edify others. Men are born for society: this society must not exist for the promotion of evil, but always for the advantage of goodness. In society therefore every day ought to inspire us with a horror for vice, and a love for virtue. All bad example must be banished from thence: for bad example

limited effect: for they only afford relief to the sufferer for a short duration of time; but good example is a never-failing act of mercy, which affords at one and the same time relief both to present and future wants: its effects may be felt even to the latest period: and the examples which the saints gave to those of their own time still edify the whole church, and will continue to edify it to the end of the world.

2.—Examples are more efficacious than words. It is a small thing to talk, where the point is the recommendation of truth, and the bringing men over to piety; the exhortation is of little avail when it is not supported and enforced by example. Words affect but one of our senses, and that only at certain times; example is a word that penetrates into the soul at every avenue, at all times, and in many ways. Miracles joined to preaching strike un-

owe good example to all; be they friends or enemies, subjects or superiors; for charity is a duty essential to all, and due to all without exception.

Example is the most excellent of all the works of mercy: for, if works of mercy done to the body preserve it in life, the soul no less draws life from good example: but it is a work of mercy due by right of strict justice: for justice cannot permit that we cause the death of souls: and unless we give them good example, we in some measure do this. With respect to the good things of this world, there is a certain number of poor, and no more, who are in want of them, but in the possession of grace and virtue all men experience some poverty. With regard to these good things, all men are born in absolute poverty; and good example is the work of mercy which brings relief to the general want: whereas, corporal works of mercy can only have a

at all the senses, and finds all the inclinations of man favourable to its doctrines; and the heart being open at all times to evil, it infuses its poison into the very inmost of the soul. This is what in the gospel is denominated scandal; that is, a snare, a stone in our way, over which we stumble and fall down. Thus, bad example causes an infinite number of souls to fall into sin. *Woe to the man by whom scandal cometh*, says Jesus Christ; it were better for him to have a mill-stone tied to his neck, and be thrown into the sea, than to be the cause of destruction and of scandal to the least of the faithful: for as the reward of those who by their good example shall have contributed to the salvation of many souls will be in proportion greater; in like manner the torments of the damned will be multiplied in proportion as they shall by their bad example have been the cause of perdition to many souls, and shall

have spread out their snares to the ruin of virtue and innocence.

Comedies, for example, operas, balls, dancings, impure and profane poetry, bad books, lascivious words and songs, indecent pictures, scandalous nakednesses, modes of dress contrary to that Christian modesty so much recommended by the apostles; all these things produce an infinite number of sins: and those who are the authors of them will have to answer for all the effects of the pernicious example which they leave behind them to all succeeding ages, in case they omit to repair such great scandals by an appropriate penance and reparation, before they present themselves at the tribunal of the sovereign judge.

Bad example bears about to every quarter the image of the world and all its passions; but an image so much to the life, that it makes a destructive impression upon all those who have not the precaution to

put themselves upon their guard. Alas! who is sufficiently so? Even the good frequently receive much harm, when they do not take care to fly from the sight of the world: and who is able to deny himself the sight of it without a particular grace and continual vigilance? Now this vigilance is very rare: almost all become infected with this noxious air of the world, which penetrates even into the retired solitude. So that we may here repeat what the apostles say, Alas! who can be saved? Every thing is possible to God: every thing becomes easy by his grace, but men frequently put obstacles in its way, rashly throwing themselves into the midst of danger.

3.—Those who are more exposed to the eyes of the public by their station, by their rank and authority, are under a far stricter obligation of shewing great examples of

nature. Their influence cannot help having great sway, whether it be in leading to good or to evil. The conduct and actions of such persons are viewed by those who depend upon them, as a kind of rule and directions, and few people are found to exist, when that which is wrong draws strength from such examples. This imposes on them the necessity of being very circumspect in all their actions and undertakings. For instance, it is by no means sufficient that a father and a mother speak instructions to those of whom their family is composed, and they by no means fulfil thereby what God requires of them, unless they also edify them in all things by an irreproachable life; by a punctual observance of every duty; by the practice of all those good works, in which they are bound to exercise their household. Let your daughter, says St. Jerome, speaking to a Christian mother, (Epist. 7. ad Lætam,)

see nothing in you but what she ma
tate without sin: remember that y
the mother of a virgin, and that yo
instruct her more by your life th
words.

Parents who give bad example t
children are, in St. Chrysostom's o
more cruel than parricides; becaus
deliver over both their bodies an
souls to hell-fire; and they will unde
punishment not only of their ow
but also of those of their children;
been the cause of them by their bad
ple. The same may be said of su
and generally of those who have
under their care. It is acting the
cruelty to their neighbour to dra
into the precipice by example; an
equally cruel to ourselves, since we
possibly draw him into the precipice
out falling in together with him.

It is indeed to all, but chiefly to those who have others in charge, that Jesus Christ addresses himself when he says, that we are to cause our light to shine before men, by rendering our good works conspicuous: not for the purpose of obtaining their applause, but that they may glorify God, the author of them, and that they may themselves be edified. St. Paul admonishes those who are in authority to be to the faithful a model and a copy in their conversations: in their intercourse with others; in charity, in faith, in chastity: to be clothed with Jesus Christ by a life conformable to his, and that his spirit appear in all their actions. Jesus Christ preached not less by action and example than by words: and we are not Christians, but inasmuch as in other things, so in this also, we do imitate him, and so edify our neighbour by the purity of our lives and our manners.

" Take care to do nothing which ma
" scandal to your neighbour and may
" him an occasion of sin. Ask par
" God, like king David, (Ps. 18.) *f*
" sins of others wherein you have bee
" cerned, and to which you may have
" cause by whatever means: and
" over your conduct with greater ca
" the time to come; that other people
" may not be laid to your charge.
" you not enough of your own, w
" taking upon you other people's?"

I have given you an example, say Redeemer, (John, 13.) *that with my a before your eyes you may do the like.*

Let us endeavour to find out the of edifying one another, (Rom. 14.)

Let us not give occasion for sca neither to Jews, nor to Gentiles, nor Church of God, (1 Cor. 10.)

A sinner that gives scandal is gui all the sins which may arise out of h

mple (St. Basil); and he will be pun-
d in the other world, for all the evil
: may happen even after his death, in
sequence of the bad example he shall
e given, (Catech. of the Council of
nt.)

Twenty-second Day.

ON CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD.

—THE will of man is corrupted, and
is desires of themselves lead to evil,
ss he take care to hold them in re-
int, and reduce them into order. It is
ie gratification of these evil desires of

the heart that sin and perdition ha
origin, for they are the source of
miseries. Jesus Christ says, that f
heart proceed evil thoughts and w
defiles a man. The will ought als
the source of all that is good: but
not natural to our will, therefor
necessary that it be impressed with
position to good by the merciful insp
of God, who fashions and orders it
unerring rule of his divine will,
right, always just, always holy.
divine will, our will becomes the
principle of all our good undertakin
of all Christian virtues. The love
infused into our heart, becomes, as i
the soul of them; and the will of
the rule by which they are directed.
ever is good in us, is only so, inasm
it is animated by this spirit: not
right but what is regulated by th
immutable and eternal.

David expresses a holy impatience to see his soul brought to a perfect submission to God; for from him alone did he consider himself bound to look for his salvation, (Ps. 61.) The soul is not otherwise subjected to God than by having its desires conformable to the will of God; and this can be effected only by grace. To be partakers of salvation, it is by no means sufficient to have fine sentences in our mouths, holy thoughts in our soul, and great external regularity in our conduct. He only will enter into heaven, who does the will of his father who is in heaven. This Truth itself has declared.

Man's fall proceeded from nothing else than from preferring his own will before the will of God. Take away self-will, says St. Bernard, and there will be no longer any hell. When a man damns his soul, he does it in no other way than in following his own will. This consists in loving only

ourselves and creatures for our own interest, our own pleasures, our own glory. This is the very essence of sin, and the source of all the corruption of man. Whereas to be a Christian is to have no other will but to love God: to do what he requires and ordains; to fly from what he forbids; to remain attached to the order laid down by him, however painful and disagreeable it may be: to be content in every situation: to have no choice of our own, but to follow the choice of God: to have no self-seeking; and to have no other object in view than to please him.

2.—This is what Jesus Christ teaches us more than any thing else by his example. He declares that *he did not come upon the earth to do his own will, but the will of his Father,* (John, 6.) *That his meat and drink is to do the will of God,* (John, 4.) *That he does nothing but what his Father*

has appointed him: that of himself he does nothing, but that he speaks what his Father has taught him: that he is sent by him, and that he is with him, for he always does what is agreeable to him, (John, 8.) At the time he entered into the world, he said to his Father, *Behold I am come; here I am, ready to do thy will,* (Heb. 10.) This I have always sought to do; the desire to accomplish thy holy law has ever been rooted in my heart. And in going out of the world, *he was obedient to his Father unto death, even the death of the cross.* So that in reality the Son of God himself became incarnate and died for no other purpose than to do the will of God, (Phil. 2.) According to this will he regulated his own will in all things, his own plans, his own actions, his sufferings. There was not a moment in the whole of his life, but what was occupied in the execution of his Father's orders; none but what served to

carry into completion some one o
of his divine pleasures, even to the
est circumstance.

Who shall dare follow his ow
when he sees that even the Son
himself declines to follow his? M
must follow their head, and live
spirit: now this holy spirit cannot
them with sentiments or with dispo
contrary to his own. From the
when St. Paul was converted by i
persecutor of the church, he bec
preacher of the gospel, and an apos
it he became so attached to the will
that he cried out "*Lord, what wi
have me to do?*" (Act. 9.) In lik
ner as it had caused the prophet
many ages before, "*Teach me to
will, for thou art my God,*" (P
The former teaches us that a sinne
converted is a man who desires no
to have any other will but that o

and the latter that a Christian is a man, who continually asks to be taught to do it in all things; and that he may not be permitted to follow his own desires. Without this there is no true conversion, nor Christianity; and we cannot be too much persuaded of this fundamental truth, that the will of God ought to be the sovereign and unchangeable rule of all the desires of man, and of all his actions: and that neither the one nor the other are correct and right but as far as they are conformable to that rule; and that we can neither be good nor happy but in submitting to it in all things.

3.—The will of God is marked out to us in the holy scriptures, more especially in the New Testament, as explained by the holy fathers. The frequent lecture of these sacred books, the meditation of this divine word joined with a prayer full of faith and perseverance, will afford us the means of

discovering it; will impart to us light and grace, whereby to act according to it in all undertakings and emergencies. Our Redeemer himself has taught us the prayer which we are to say for this purpose, "*May thy will, O Lord, be done on earth as in heaven;*" that is: may men do thy will as the angels and saints do it, with wisdom, with love, with promptitude; may they hate only what thou hatest; may they love only what thou lovest: may they desire nothing and do nothing but what pleases thee, what thou commandest, and what thou advisest. This is true piety; this is what the happy ones in heaven began to do while yet on earth: it is what they now do in heaven, in the greatest perfection: and this same perfection we must desire and daily pray for; since of our own strength we are unable to attain it: for grace alone must procure it by us and in us. His grace procures it by us, when

it enables us to keep his commandments, and to be guided implicitly by his inspirations: it procures it in us, when it moves us to a perfect submission to all the orders of his providence, and causes us to receive as from the hand of a father the good things he bestows upon us, and the adversities with which he chastises us; the losses, the afflictions, the sicknesses, the misfortunes, &c. by which he induces us to say, with Jesus Christ, "*May thy will be done and not ours,*" (Matt. 26.) If thou give us prosperity, give us grace to use it with distrust, with moderation, with a heart wholly given to thee: if thou send us adversity, give us also grace to bear it with patience and with submission, to receive it with love, with gratitude, in peace of mind, with the joy of the Holy Ghost. In fine, make us, O God, humble when in enjoyment, constant when in trouble, submissive and content in every situation.

To do the will of God, is, according to St. Cyprian, (Cypr. de Or. Dom.) to practice what Jesus Christ has done, and what he has taught: humility in our behaviour, constancy in faith, modesty and reserve in speech, justice in our dealings, mercy in our proceedings, regularity in our manners: to do no injustice to any one, and to bear with the injustices of others; to live in peace with our brethren, to love God with our whole heart; to love him as our Father and fear him as our God: to prefer nothing whatever to Jesus Christ, as he preferred nothing to us: to be inseparably united to his charity; to attach ourselves to his cross with courage and with confidence: to be ready and intrepid with open profession of our tongues, if circumstances require that we sustain the combat, for the glory of his name; to fight through torments with a holy independance of soul, and suffer death patiently in order to be

crowned. It is thus that we become co-heirs with Jesus Christ: that we walk in the commandments of God, that we fulfil the will of our Father who is in heaven.

"*Labour to bring your will into subjec-*
"*tion to the law of God: renounce your*
"*own inclinations: pray to God that his*
"*will be ever fulfilled in you, and whenever*
"*it shall happen that what you yourself*
"*desire, shall be contrary to the will of*
"*God, renounce with all your heart those*
"*desires of your own, in order to be at*
"*liberty to embrace with eagerness what*
"*pleases God, in the full persuasion that*
"*nothing can happen but by his ordination:*
"*that he will turn all to your good, that*
"*the hairs of your head are numbered, and*
"*that not one shall be lost,* (Luke, 12.)
"*If you wish to remain faithful to God,*
"*fear nothing so much as to displease him,*
"*nothing so much as to act contrary to*
"*his will.*"

Say to him frequently, with Jesus Christ, *These things must be so, my Father, because such is thy good pleasure,* (Matt. 11.)

And with the prophet, *My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready, it is prepared for every thing,* (Ps. 16.)

Twenty-Third Day.

OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

1.—CONFIDENCE in God means a firm hope and moral assurance, that God not only is able to do what we expect from him, but that he is also willing; that he will enable us to find the way to come to him; and that after having given us his own Son, and the first gifts of his holy

spirit, as pledges and guarantees of our salvation, he cannot now refuse us any thing which is in itself right, and in the order of his dispensations, provided we ask for it in a proper manner. And truly, since he has been pleased to deliver up his own Son to death for us, are we not fully justified in placing our whole confidence in him? Have we not room to trust that *he will be willing to free us from every danger, if we be faithful to him* (2 Tim. 4.); to secure us against every wicked action, and conduct us safe to his kingdom, without which all other graces will turn to no advantage.

To this confidence he exhorts us himself in all the sacred writings: have confidence in God with your whole heart, says he, by the mouth of the wise man, (Prov. 3.) Consider the multitudes of mankind that have existed among nations, and know that never any one who hoped in the Lord

has been confounded. Who is the
that has remained stedfast in the
mands of God, and has been abandon
(Eccl. 2.) Who ever invoked him and
been despised by him? Our fathers
hoped in thee, says the royal prop
(Ps. 21.) and thou hast delivered th
they have cried out to thee, and thou
saved them: they have hoped in thee,
have never been confounded. Leav
the Lord the care of all thy concerns,
he himself will nourish thee: he will
abandon the just to confusion for e
Cast into his bosom all thy inquiet
says St. Peter, (1 Pet. 5.) *for he has*
of thee. Unhappy those, says the
man, (Eccl. 29.) whose heart fails th
who place not their trust in God, and
that reason have not his protection:
therefore the apostle urgently exhorts
faithful, whose minds had been disma
by the severity of persecution, *not to*

confidence, since it is destined to be so abundantly rewarded, (Heb. 10.)

Nothing honours God more than the placing our whole confidence in him, and hoping all things from him, even when from man every hope of aid has been given up. As it is said of Abraham (Rom. 4.) *that he hoped against all hope.* And holy Job says, (Job. 13.) that even if God were to kill him, he would not cease to hope in him. It is giving glory to his omnipotence, to his goodness, to his mercy; it is acknowledging that he is the source and author of all our good: that without him we can do nothing, but with him we can do all things: whereas to lose confidence in him, is to say that his power is not great enough to protect us, nor his bounty great enough to impart relief in our greatest necessities; and that creatures are more able in their malice to do us harm, than he has power and goodness to do us benefit.

Can any thing enter into the mind injurious to him than such a thought?

Our whole application then ought to strengthen ourselves in the confi which we owe him, by a life filled Christian virtues and good works: to in his ways with increasing ardour sanctify ourselves more and more by st adhering to our duties: for without our confidence would be no other presumption and a dangerous illusion is God's will that we expect every thi come from him; but it is not his wil we tempt him: and it would be to him to rest secure upon his goodnes his power, and not correspond wit graces in renouncing sin, and in according to the gospel.

2.—Provided we seek the Lord, no will be wanting to us, neither for this nor for the other, (Ps. 33.) But we

seek him, according to the scripture, with all our heart and in truth: and we do not seek him with all our heart, if in seeking any thing, we seek it not for his sake; but seek it to satisfy our self-love, our concupiscence, our vanity, or any other passion. We seek him not in truth, if we seek him in any other way than that pointed out to us by Jesus Christ: by any other means than those prescribed in the gospel; if we seek him where he is not; in a state of life wherein we do not please him, and whereto he does not call us: if we seek him by performances and works good in themselves, but which he asks not from us: by acts of supererogation and of council, which prevent us from fulfilling our duties and complying with his precepts and those of his church. It is not by such means that we shall come to God: and a confidence that rests on such a foundation, can be no other than rash and illusory.

But a good life, a faithful observance of the duties of a Christian, and of the obligations of our state of life; the experience which we have of his mercies to us; vigilance and application to discern our faults and to correct them; to establish ourselves in true humility, in sincere love of God and of our neighbour; to tear ourselves from ourselves, and from the things of this earth; these are the foundations of a truly Christian confidence, because they are so many proofs of the mercies which God shews to a soul. Such a confidence gives to a man the peace of a good conscience, (Phil. 4.) a peace which controuls the passions, calms our troubles within, and keeps our hearts and minds secure in Jesus Christ. For it is in peace, in silence, and in the quiet of the heart, that God delights to be served; there it is that he reposes and fixes his dwelling.

Still we are not to flatter ourselves that we shall be able here in this life to arrive at such a state of tranquility as to be free from pains, from struggles, from troubles: such a state belongs only to the other life. As long as we live in a mortal body, we shall never be exempt from sin and from corruption: and sin happens not without struggle in a soul that has a horror of it. Confidence in God diminishes pain in proportion as it is firmly rooted; but it does not prevent all pain; it only prevents us from being overcome by it. It enables us to possess our souls in patience; to be submissive to God's ordinations, and to keep our eyes fixed on heaven, from whence we look for aid to come to us. Nay, sometimes God afflicts his most faithful servants with temptations so troublesome, and so dangerous, as to make them despond, to fear lest he may have abandoned them; but to such, *hope is a fast and safe anchor*

against every storm, (Heb. 6.) they are supported in these perils by confidence animating them with the strength of a lively faith.

3.—We may in our troubles gather fortitude and consolation from the following considerations: 1. God never refuses to our bodies the nourishment necessary for them; and will he refuse it to our souls? Truly not, provided we take care to live in the dependance of his grace: that we do not strive against the order of his appointments, and that we place in him our whole confidence. 2. From our having received so many special graces till this time, we have reason to say, that if he has begun he will complete his work: that he will not abandon us, that he will give us the grace of perseverance, and the possession of his kingdom. 3. By our confidence in God, we honour him: our confidence

does homage to his goodness and to his faithfulness in his promises; while, in delivering ourselves up to his disposal, we obtain of him an increase of support. On the contrary, we cannot permit distrust to gain admission into our hearts, without imputing to him, in some sort, the charge of inability, and of a want of good will; without implying that he may possibly prove unfaithful to his promises. A most heinous disposition this, and calculated to turn away the course of his mercies from us.

It happens also sometimes that poverty, misery, sickness, and the wants of this life, are so pressing, that we stand in need of all our faith and of all our confidence in divine providence, in order to guard against temptations, which naturally accompany us in those straits. Then it is that this virtue calls to our aid the truths of the gospel and the promises of Jesus Christ. It points

out to us that these things befall us only by God's appointment: that he afflicts us because he has designs of mercy towards us, and because he loves us: that, being all-powerful, nothing is impossible to him: that it will be quite easy to him to deliver us out of this state of suffering whenever it shall please him: that being our father, and as such addressed by us continually, we cannot doubt of his good will towards us: that he himself assures us that, although a mother full of tenderness should be capable of abandoning the infant at her breast, he will not abandon us (Isa. 49.); that he is acquainted with our wants better than ourselves: that he does for us what is necessary for us, and what is most for our good: that if the state of suffering in which we are placed were not the most advantageous to our salvation, he would remove us out of it: that if he does not deliver us from it, it is in order to bestow

on us a more excellent gift than are those goods, of which he deprives us, and which doubtless we should be guilty of abusing, in case he were to grant them: and, of consequence, whether he lend an accordant ear to our requests, or whether he turn away his ear from them, we ought to be equally content.

" *Say not then, How shall we be pro-*
' *vided wherewith to eat, to drink, to be*
' *clothed? How shall we be able to endure*
' *such manifold evils; how escape this*
' *danger, how extricate ourselves from this*
' *embarrassment? Have but confidence in*
' *God: pray in all earnestness that his will*
' *may be fulfilled in you, and not your*
' *will: place all your interests in his hands;*
' *but, before all things, seek first the king-*
' *dom of God and his justice: ask of him*
' *that he will please to fix his seat in your*
' *heart, and give there increase to his love:*

" be not anxious about
" grant it over and abo
" that it will be useful to
" to your advancement.
" to have no other care
" than to secure his sal
" life, and by a serious
" performance of the wo
" given him."

Impress upon your he
the scripture, " *Those w*
dence in the Lord, are li
Sion, immoveable for eve

Those who know thy n
O Lord, for thou never
who seek thee, (Ps. 9.)

The Lord is good to
him, (Lam. Jer. 3.)

Let your life be fr
(Heb. 13.) be content w
since God himself says
leave thee, neither will I

Throw yourself into the bosom of your God, says St. Austin; *he will not fly from you, nor leave you to fall.*

Twenty-Fourth Day.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

1.—GOD is man's whole good, and the possession of this Sovereign Good constitutes man's perfection and happiness. God created him for no other purpose than to give himself to him and to possess him. He gave him a mind for no other use than that he might know him and contemplate him; nor a will, but that he might love him. As soon as he knows him and loves

him entirely, he begins to partake of his divine perfections: of his purity, of his sanctity, of his goodness, of his wisdom, of his justice, and of his power: possessing him, he is replenished with him; he tastes pleasures ineffable, and finds therein every thing; and all his desires being gratified, he seeks for nothing further. Yet to this man cannot arrive, but by various degrees of knowledge and of love; and it may be truly said, that the whole occupation of man, during this life, ought to be to study to know God well, and love him more and more.

As God is an abyss of truth, he can never be sufficiently known; and as he is an inexhaustible source of good, he can never be sufficiently loved. Being an infinite good, he deserves to be infinitely loved: but if we are not capable of loving him as much as he deserves to be loved, it is certain that we are at least obliged to

ove him to the utmost of our ability; to ove him without bounds and without measure: to love him above all things, and nore than every other thing that can be oved. He is the ultimate end to which very thing ought to be referred, and vherein we ought to take our rest as in he centre of our hearts without going urther; and therefore it is not lawful for is to love any thing whatever but in refernce to him.

It is the first and greatest of all the commandments, that we love the Lord our God with our whole heart, with our whole oul, with all our mind and with all our trength: can any thing farther be thought f? To love God is to incline our heart owards him, to direct our desires and ffections to him: to love him with our hole *heart*, is to give to him every movement of the will, and to keep none in reerve for the creature. To love him with

ole *soul*, is to make every thing we
s of life and motion subservient to
lory: to consecrate the members of
body and the use of our senses, to jus-
, to piety, to the exercise of good works;
reduce the animal part of man to obe-
ience to God's law. To love him with
our whole *mind*, is to dedicate to him all
our thoughts, our understanding, our ac-
quirements; for such use of them he
expects from each one according to his
situation in life. To love him with all our
strength, is to use whatever power we may
possess, whatever authority or influence,
for the execution of his will and furtherance
of his designs; in a word, whatever we d
or are able to do, to do all for God, witho
self-complacency, without listening to s
love, which is so afraid of doing too m
and which is ever anxious to consul
own interest, even at the expense of
lecting those of it's God. In actio

ese, the love of God may properly be aid to consist. To confine our love of im to sentiment, to professions of love of im above every thing, is not the love he laims of us.

2.—Jesus Christ, in giving us this comand in its full extent, does not mean to mpose upon us the obligation of loving od in this life with that perfect love, with hich he is beloved by the blessed in eaven, but to point out to us where to irect our aim. Human frailty does not ermit us to live on this earth without sin: o one is so perfect as never to fall. What e requires, is, that if we every day comnit faults of surprise, of frailty, of ignoance, we should every day also expiate hem by a life of penance: that we seriously strive to correct ourselves; that as we never are so much detached from ourselves and from creatures as we ought to be, we

must not relax in our endeavours to detach ourselves more and more; to cause the love of God to increase in our heart; and daily to afford new proofs of that increase. It is a fire which we must never suffer to be extinguished, but which we must constantly feed and keep alive. The perfection of this life consists in marching always onward, and never stopping until we be arrived at our journey's end; and the perfection of the other, consists in the peaceful and undisturbed enjoyment of him whom we love.

And can the commandment, which he imposes upon us of loving him, appear to be over and above rigorous to a Christian soul? On the contrary, is it not this commandment that takes off from the other commandments whatever is hard and painful? It is love that fulfils the law of God, removes difficulties, blunts the edge of bitternesses, makes sweet the yoke of Jesus

Christ and light his burthen. Take away love, and who shall be able to carry that burthen? Without love we must sink under the yoke.

Is it then too much, "*With our whole heart?*" That heart in itself so small a thing; and God so great, so amiable? If we give not the whole to him, what shall we give him at all? It would be injustice to seek to give him only a part of that which belongs to him by so many titles; and where the giving him the whole constitutes our greatest glory. What am I to thee, Lord, cries out St. Austin, that thou doest me the honour to give me a commandment so sweet and delightful as that of loving thee: and that thou sufferest me not to fail therein, without holding out to me the severest punishments? What! Is it not the extreme of misery not to love thee, as it is the summit of happiness to love thee: thee, who art goodness itself, and

completely wretched.

Nevertheless, although it be so na
to man to love God; and although
command so to do be engraven on his
nature, in characters which nothing
efface, still, since his heart has been
rupted by that false and profane love v
is the effect of his first sin, he is not ca
towards this supreme good, unless
same attract him and turn him tow
him. *Man no longer loves God, u*
God go before and shew him the wa
loving him first, (1 John, 4.) This
comes from God. Nay, God is this
No one can come to Jesus Christ, unle

3.—But not unfrequently a person flatters himself he loves God, because he feels some emotion in his regard: now to ascertain this, let him consider his actions. If you love me, says Jesus Christ, keep my commandments. It is not by thought, nor by transient emotions, nor by words, that we must form our judgment in this matter, but by actions, by the whole conduct of life. Love, says St. Austin, cannot be idle: it is a fire always in motion. The love of God accomplishes great things where it exists; if it performs nothing, it is not true love, (St. Greg.) It is by love that faith is put into action: take away love, and faith becomes inert: in the words of St. James, *it is dead.* *If any one loves me,* says Jesus Christ, *he will keep my word;* he who loves me not, keeps not my word, although to man he may appear to keep it.

The love of God is the principle, the motive and the end of all Christian actions: the principle, because love puts the will in motion and raises it to God; the motive, because our actions cannot be denominated Christian, but inasmuch as we love God; and the end, because we are not to do good, but in order to arrive at that perfect love which will render us happy in the other life. To do any action out of any other principle, with any other end in view, from a secret love of ourselves, or of the world, for a temporal interest, or out of a desire to please men, is not to keep God's word, but man's word; it is to act for ourselves, not for God.

By love, the soul holds converse with her God; by love, she becomes his temple and his dwelling-place. Not to love him, is to have nothing in common with him; it is to be without God in this world. In possessing charity, we possess God him-

self; and, destitute of charity, we are destitute of every thing. It is charity that constitutes every thing that is good; and without charity all the rest is nothing; *nothing the greatest miracles; nothing the most abundant works of mercy; nothing even martyrdom itself.* (1 Cor. 13.) Does any thing then exist more great, more excellent, more necessary than charity?

Truly, the first motions of a man's heart ought to be consecrated to God: and yet perhaps his heart has not yet begun to love him, the being by whom it has been created. At least, let us now begin, and let us say to him, with St. Austin, "Too late do I love thee, O beauty so ancient and ever new: too late do I love thee!" Let us repair by zeal our past negligence: let us entertain for the Creator of the world as much ardour, as much affection, as we have entertained for the world. It is indeed the lowest degree of love that is due to

him: but at least let us afford to him that which we have granted to his enemy. Alas! can we without crime accord him less?

After all, what is there that we can give him, if we have not first received it from him. He commands us to love him: let us beseech him to give to us what he commands; to give us his love, and the grace to make it fructify from day to day in our hearts. O love ever burning, and never extinguished! O charity, who art my God, inflame me, (St. Austin.) The heart of man must necessarily have something to occupy it: it is made to love, (St. Austin on the Ps.) To love nothing at all, if such a thing were possible, would be a state of languor and of indolence; would be a state of death: man would be insupportable to himself, (idem.) The commandment given by God, *that we love not the world*, is not given in order to extin-

guish all love in us; that would be to degrade us, and to reduce us to the state of brute beasts, or even of things inanimate: what he commands, is, that we turn the course of our affections from the creature, where they are ever corrupted, and where they entail misery, and direct them to their original source, which is himself; in like manner as the rivulet is turned into the beautiful meadow, that it may not lose itself in muddy places.

17 Can our love be placed more advantageously than in him, who is to be to us the source of delights throughout eternity?

" *The holy scriptures and the holy fa-*
" *thers distinguish two principles, to which,*
" *as to two lovers, they refer all human*
" *actions: the love of God, which is charity;*
" *and the love of ourselves, which is concu-*
" *piscence; the spirit of the flesh,* (St. Paul,
" Rom. 8.—Gal. 5.—St. Austin—St. Leo.)

"*Examine which of the two it is that "prompts you to action.*"

What is there in heaven, and what on earth, that I can desire but thou, O God, who art the God of my heart, and the portion of my inheritance for ever? (Ps. 72.)

We neither serve God nor adore him otherwise than by loving him, (St. Aust.)

Twenty-Fifth Day.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

1.—IF in loving God we cannot make the first advances, let us at least make him a return of love. Of his love to us he could not give us a more conspicuous

proof than that which we have in the mystery of a God becoming incarnate; his Son sent into the world to deliver us from the death of sin, and to impart to us a life eternal and divine. This immense benefit demands then from us a distinguished love, a perfect gratitude. The Son of God has become man for us; he has chosen to die upon a cross in order to redeem us and to reconcile us to his eternal Father; and we ought to be willing to give our lives a thousand times in testimony of our love and gratitude. He has redeemed us with his own blood: by his death he has acquired for us salvation: he has procured for us all graces necessary to salvation: he has nourished us with his own flesh; he communicates to us his spirit in order that we may live by him and be a part of him. It would be monstrous ingratitude in us to forget such great graces, an ingratitude deserving of punishment the most severe.

There is no Christian but what may say for himself in particular, what St. Paul has before said, (Gal. 2.) *Jesus Christ has loved me and has delivered himself to death for me.* There is no one for whom his blood has not flowed, and his life not been given; and whatever he has done for his church in general, the same has he no less done for each one in particular. It is in the spirit of gratitude for such great grace that this apostle says, (Phil. 3.) *that what he before had considered as a gain, and a great advantage, had since appeared to him, when he regarded Jesus Christ, to be a loss and a disadvantage. That he denied himself all things, and regarded all things as dirt, in order to gain Christ. That Jesus is his life, and that death would be to him a gain,* (Phil. 1.) for that he wished to be freed from the trammels of his body, that he might unite himself to Jesus: that he is crucified together with him; and that it is

not he himself who liveth in his mortal body, but Jesus who liveth in him.

Jesus Christ died not less for us than for St. Paul. *In this,* says that apostle, (Rom. 5.) *has God manifested his love for us, because, while we were yet sinners, Jesus Christ still failed not to die for us.* Were it not for what he has done for us, we should yet be immersed in darkness; should be dead in sin, slaves of the devil, and deserving of hell. *We owe to him the life of our soul, the life of our body, and whatever we are,* (2 Cor. 5.) and we ought to live but for him who died for us: we ought to have no other ambition than to possess him: all other things we ought to regard as a loss and as objects of our contempt. Nothing ought to appear of any value, neither fortune, nor honour, nor goods, nor health, nor life itself, when any loss of them is to be sustained for his sake. In such manner are we obliged to love him,

who has so loved us, as to suffer for us the death of the cross: and we are in every respect bound to enter into the dispositions of the great apostle, and to say with him, (Rom. 8.) "*What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or dangers, or fire, or violence?*" But, alas! the greater part of Christians know not even Jesus Christ; how then shall they love him?

2.—There is no salvation but by Jesus Christ; and *there is no other name under heaven given to man, whereby he may be saved,* (Acts, 4.) ***There is then no salvation for those who know him not; for those who love him not, for those who give themselves not to him and who walk not as he walked,*** (1 John, 2.) To be without Jesus is to be without God; is to be in a state of damnation: for we cannot

approach nor enter into his kingdom but through this Divine Saviour. He is our only Hope, our only Mediator, our Sovereign Bishop; our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Master, our Chief: all which qualities indispensibly oblige us to render him love for love, and life for life: to adore him in his person, in his mysteries, in his miracles; to meditate upon his words and regulate our practice by them; to imitate his virtues, study his actions, his intentions, his appointments; to consider his passion under all its circumstances and varieties; to fasten ourselves with him to the cross; to consecrate to him our heart, our mind, our body, our whole being.

St. Paul professed to know nothing and to preach nothing but Jesus crucified: to impress upon the hearts of the faithful nothing but him, and to attach them to nothing but to him. *He is that one spouse of souls, to which this apostle sought to*

affiance them, in order to present them to him as a chaste virgin, (2 Cor. 11.) accordingly our whole life and all our actions ought to have no other end in view than to form Jesus Christ in our hearts, and to manifest that form in our manners; to exhibit in ourselves the image of that heavenly man; to rectify by his model all our sentiments and affections: to reproduce in ourselves his spirit, his mysteries, his maxims, his gospel. The disciple approaches in no other way to perfection but inasmuch as he imitates his master: and true piety consists in conformity and resemblance to Jesus Christ; in living in close union with him, and in full dependance on him; in a word, in being animated by the same spirit.

Jesus Christ is the true vine and we are the branches, (St. John, 15.) It is from the sap that the branches draw their nourishment and feed their fruits, and we

cannot produce fruit unless we remain in him by a steady and unalterable attachment of heart. We can do nothing without him, but with him we can do every thing. It is by love that we are attached to Jesus Christ; by love we remain in him, and through love we feel the influence of his grace. When we do not love, that influence is not felt, we become arid, and like branches lopped from the trunk we wither for want of nourishment.

Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life, (John, 14.) As man, he is the way, because we cannot come to God but through his merits, his prayers, his mediation; in following his examples, in living as he lived; in dying as he died, in the same spirit and the same dispositions. As God, he is the truth and the life: *the truth,* to dispel by his light the darkness of our ignorance, and instruct us in holy rules whereby to regulate our manners. *The life,*

by his grace to snatch us from the destruction of sin and animate us by his spirit; to enkindle true piety in our hearts and therewith to season all our actions: to give to us in heaven a life more full and copious, by replenishing us with the enjoyment of the riches of his divinity; for we receive the life of grace from him, and only from him shall we receive the life of glory. In him God made choice of us before the creation of the world; in him he has loaded us with blessings; *has restored us to life, has raised us from the dead and given to us seats in heaven,* (Eph. 2.) In him therefore we shall possess God, and be eternally happy.

3.—Jesus Christ, according to St. John, is the light and life of men: light in the mind by the knowledge of him; life in the heart by his love. To know him and to love him is life in reality: he who knows

and loves him not is dead in God's
lthough before men he may have
it of being alive. But man cannot
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ht and that love which he himself
And it is in truth he who lives in
m we belong to him, (John, 3.)
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but what is given him from heaven,
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e has remained in us, ever since
of our first parents, such extreme
ss, so strong an inclination to
id such an aversion to good, that,
ng to St. Prosper, (Poem, p. 4.)
not able even to lift up his eyes to
ereign light, because he is hood-
; he is become a captive to the
of his soul; the angel of darkness

has so stripped him of the good will of God, as not to leave him this one advantage to know that he is sick, and to be acquainted with the dangerousness of his wounds: insomuch that unless the grace of our Divine Mediator be given us, we can neither know the evils which surround us, nor shun them: neither discern the good we ought to do, nor duly accomplish it.

For this reason we must ever attach ourselves to Jesus Christ, and unceasingly have recourse to God through his merits, for the obtaining this inestimable gift of grace, which he has procured for us by his sufferings and his death. He voluntarily became our advocate and our mediator with his father, and it is by him that God receives our prayers and our sacrifices, it is by him that they become effectual in our behalf. Hence, at the conclusion of every prayer, the church professes to offer the petition *through Jesus Christ our Lord:*

and by her example she teaches us to use no other mode of prayer; never to present ourselves before Almighty God but in company with Jesus Christ: never to make him any offering, nor ask any thing of him, but what is worthy to be offered and to be asked for by this Divine Saviour. In him the eternal Father places all his affection and his complacency; loves us only in him: and he cannot regard us otherwise than with abhorrence whenever we appear in his presence solitary and unaccompanied by our Mediator: but when he beholds us in Jesus Christ, and beholds Jesus Christ in us, he can refuse us nothing: neither his love, nor his graces, nor his kingdom.

Let us then belong to Jesus, and all things will belong to us. Can the Father refuse any thing to his Son, or to those to whom he has given his Son? Let us love Jesus Christ, and God will love us: he will enter into us; he will make his dwel-

ling in us; he will possess us. What motives for confidence, for love, for gratitude! Can there be any thing to apprehend from a protection so effectual? *Who*, says St. Paul, *shall dare to condemn the elect of God?* (Rom. 8.) Jesus Christ died; and also rose again: he is at the right hand of God, where he intercedes for us. If we have a God for us, who will dare to be against us? Yes, let us place the whole of our concerns in his hands; let us leave to him, in full confidence, whatever is of interest to us; let us be guided by this Divine Leader: let us execute whatever he ordains; let us remain in his love: *if you keep my commandments*, saith he, *you will abide in my love, as I myself have kept the commandments of my Father, and abide in his love*, (St. John, 15.)

" *Ask of Jesus Christ, in all your prayers,*
" *that he will impart to you his love: with-*

"out his grace no one can love him: and "it is by the Holy Ghost who has been "given to us that charity is diffused into "our hearts, (Rom. 5.) *To ask him for "this charity is to ask for every thing: "and not to ask it, is in one sense not to "ask for any thing; because without it,* according to St. Paul, *we are nothing; "even though we were to give all we have "to the poor, nay even our bodies to be "burnt,"* (1 Cor. 13.)

If any one love not Jesus Christ, let him be an anathema, (1 Cor. 16.)

If I owe myself and all I have to God for his having created me, what is there that I can give to him for having redeemed me; and for his having done it in so wonderful a manner, so as to deliver his own Son to death for the sake of a sinner like me?

Twenty-Sixth Day.

OF THE IMITATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

1.—SUCH is the extreme weakness of man, in consequence of his fall, that, unless he be supported by powerful aid, he falters at every step. The grace of Jesus Christ affords him the necessary strength and interior vigour, by which he is enabled to support himself and advance onwards in the road to salvation. But the sight of creatures, and above all bad example, is continually weakening him, and drawing him back again into sin. He stands in need therefore of great examples of virtue, and of objects that may serve as a counter-attraction to such great temptations. Through the impressions of the senses he falls, he must therefore be upheld by impressions of an opposite nature. The

sight of the world, which ought to carry him towards God, distracts and corrupts him; the sight then of a God incarnate, dwelling among men, raised upon a cross and holding out examples of every species of virtue, must call him back to himself, and make him see with his eyes what it is he ought to be. The corruption of his heart, joined to bad examples and scandals, which surround him, are two weights which hinder him from following the attractions of grace, he of course stands in need of a copy for imitation; the contemplation of which, in conjunction with the holy desires which the Holy Ghost excites in the interior man, may animate him, strengthen him, and bear him on to good.

Man, says St. Austin, stood in need of a guide whom he might follow without fear of being led astray. He could not trust himself to a sinful man, blind like himself, such as every man was. The

guide whom he needed was no other than God; and him he could not see, neither did he know him. Wherefore it was needful that God should make himself visible, and place himself among corporal and sensible objects, in order to reclaim man from that dissipation into which the view of these things had thrown him, and to set before his eyes a model which he might follow with perfect confidence. Now this model is the Son of God made man.

God, according to St. Paul, *has predestined his elect to be made conformable to the image of his son,* (Rom. 8.) This conformity is not acquired but by imitating him: and therefore no man can be saved unless he imitate the copy set by Jesus Christ: the whole of whose life was nothing else (says St. Austin,) but one continued instruction for the direction of our conduct; and we only sin, inasmuch as we wander from the imitation of his life

and example, (Lib. de vera Relig. c. 16.) His life is so much our rule, says again this same father, (L. de Cate. Redib. c. 22.) that the only way to sin is to desire what he despised, or to endeavour to shun what he chose to suffer. He contemned all the goods of this life, in order to teach us to contemn them: he suffered all its evils, in order to give us courage to support them. In being born of a virgin, espoused to a labouring artisan, he did away with all the pride of nobility and descent. He chose to be poor, that he might teach us not to glory in riches: he was not willing to let himself be made king, in order to teach us humility and to cure us of all pride. He suffered hunger, thirst and fatigue in his journeyings: he was as one deaf and dumb under the outrages of the people: he suffered himself to be bound in chains: he permitted himself to be whipped: underwent the punishment of the cross and also

abide in Jesus Christ, must himself a
Jesus Christ has walked, (1 John, 2.
has given us an example, that kee
mind what he has done, we do the lik
(St. John, 13.)

2.—*Be ye therefore followers of G*
most dear children, (Eph. 5.) We
received through Christ a new beinq
we are become new creatures by his
Such then, as the being is, such also
be the life and actions of that being
we ought in all things to bear the ma
the new man, which is Jesus Christ.

virtues. For this end we must, with Jesus, despise the glory of the world, its riches and its pleasures; and with him embrace humility, penance and labour; be content when men depreciate and despise us; love poverty and the inconveniences attendant on it; feel pleasure in crosses and afflictions; or at least, suffer with submission and patience: be united to him, whether it be in acting or in enduring; and in all things adopt his spirit. That spirit will no doubt produce in us the same desires and the same dispositions which it produced in him.

But, alas! the whole of the desires of Jesus Christ were for heaven, and the whole of ours are for this earth: all his thoughts were directed to God; and all ours are directed to this world. Judge by this whether we are Christians! Men are willing to imitate Jesus Christ in those parts of his life which are considered glo-

and they say, with St. Peter, " *He*
well:" but scarcely is there any o
is found willing to be with him on C
This is not to follow Christ; it is to
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The gospel is not separable: and to r
no more of it than what is pleasing
is to reject it wholly. The Son o
made himself man for no other reaso
to annihilate himself and to suffer
the glory to which he has been raise

separate what God, in the person of his Son, has so intimately united. The whole of the gospel is so interwoven with the cross, that the apostle calls it, *the word of the cross*, (1 Cor. 1.) And when he preaches the gospel, he protests that *he preaches nothing but Christ crucified:* and he also declares that he knows no other, (1 Cor. 2.) To be willing then to follow Jesus in those of his actions which appear splendid, and wherein he receives honour from man; and not when he is despised, calumniated, persecuted and crucified, is to renounce the gospel: it is to renounce the glory and the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

3.—*He who followeth Jesus Christ, walketh not in darkness;* (St. John, 8.); the darkness of ignorance and sin. He enjoys the light; not an unfruitful light without effect, but a light that giveth life; a light which kindleth in his heart the fire of the

Holy Ghost: a light, of which charity is the principle. To imitate this Divine Saviour, is to have wisdom itself for a guide: his ways are luminous and his paths safe.

Following those paths we are conducted unto true life; because the guide is truth itself, which leads to a happy and eternal life: a life which, according to St. Austin, is no other than an inexpressible joy which is relished in truth. Hence, not to follow Christ, is to walk in the crooked ways of blindness and of darkness, which can only lead to an eternal death, however strait they may appear to man. For to be saved, it is not enough that we lead a life of decency and regularity: when we take not the spirit of Jesus along with us; when we make not a point of following him by humility, and by a sincere renunciation of ourselves and of the things of this world, all that probity and external virtue, so much admired in the world, is nothing

than a vain philosophy and deceitful
sion.

he principal pursuit of a Christian upon
h ought to be to study Jesus Christ; to
ow him step by step, to meditate upon
life, his actions, his examples, his views,
motives: in these, nothing will be
ad defective, nothing doubtful, nothing
ertain. To have a master and a guide
m we can follow in all things, without
ger of being led astray, is an advantage
only rare and scarce, but one which is
where else to be found. Who can con-
him of error or of sin? His doctrine
his actions are beyond the reach of re-
ach. Out of his sacred mouth no word
proceeded which could lead to decep-
; in his speech there was nothing
ncere, nothing equivocal. Even his
t mortal enemies, at the time that they
noured against him, as being one who
led the people by his wicked doctrine,

were forced to acknowledge that to teach the way of God in truth was characteristic of all he said. In fine, on whatever side his conduct is examined, every thing is found to be holy, every thing praise-worthy, every thing deserving of imitation. Whatever he did, and whatever he suffered, was for us; and it ought all to be again manifested in us. It availeth nothing to be a Christian by halves.

Every one of us must exhibit in our lives a living copy of this divine original, if we wish to have a share in his kingdom. To follow Christ in part, and in part the world, is to renounce Jesus Christ, and to give one's self up entirely to the enemy. They are two masters, whom no one can serve at the same time. Their spirit and their sentiments are not more opposite than are their usages and customs. The reason why people follow the practices of the children of this world, is, because they are held by

the spirit of the world: had they the spirit of Jesus Christ, they would not follow them. That spirit cannot be within, and not manifest itself outwardly; for there is experienced in this holy spirit so much sweetness and attraction, that all taste for that which is derived from the corruption and vanity of the world is quickly lost. How shall it be possible any longer to run after the onions of Egypt, after muddy waters, if once we but taste this hidden manna? But to taste Jesus Christ, we must possess him, and whoever belongs not to him is incapable of comprehending his sweetness: indeed, to such a one, all attempt to describe it must prove fruitless.

" Examine yourselves and see whether you " have the spirit of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 13.): *" if his spirit is in you, it will shew itself in " the whole of your conduct, and you will " experience its workings in your interior.*

" Watch carefully the motions of your in-
" terior, lest you fall from your present
" elevation by suffering the impressions of
" this holy spirit to be effaced from your
" hearts."

If any one will come after me, let him renounce himself, let him take up his cross daily, and follow me, (Luke, 9.) To follow him is to imitate him.

In vain do I glory in the name of Christian, if I imitate not Jesus Christ, (St. Bern.)

Twenty-Seventh Day.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

1.—THERE is nothing that Jesus more strongly recommends than the love of our neighbour. He has particularly made it the subject of his command; and he has himself given throughout such striking examples of it, that it is not possible for a person to dispense with himself from complying with the injunction, and from imitating Jesus Christ in this point, without renouncing his gospel and all hope of his promises. *This commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you,* (St. John, 15.) That is to say, that you love one another, so as to be prepared to die for one another, if need be, in the same manner as I love you so as to die for you. What greater love can there be than

to give one's life for one's friend? He gave his life even for his enemies, when he immolated himself for us on the cross. *We have had a proof of the love of God towards us,* (says St. John,) *in that he gave his life for us; and we also must give our lives for our brethren,* (1 John, 3.) He who shall shut up his heart and his bowels from his neighbour and shall refuse him aid in his necessity, neither loveth his neighbour nor his God. How shall that man be said to love his neighbour, who, far from being willing to lay down his life for him, after the example of Christ, will not even give him a piece of bread? And how does he love God, who disobeys God, in violating one of his greatest commandments, and who loves not the very person for whom God has shewn such excess of love, as to give to him his only Son, in delivering him up to death for him: as to be willing to elevate him to the rank of being

a child of God; nay, to create him for the purpose of possessing God eternally? It is to insult God, not to love the person whom he himself loveth with such singular love.

So many and such powerful motives will no doubt compel us to love our neighbour; not through motives of interest, or because it is necessary, useful or agreeable; that would be to love him as we love the beasts or inanimate things, and such a love would not be charity, but a shameful cupidity; but compel us to love him as Jesus Christ loved us: to have his salvation in view before all things; to love nothing in him but God alone, his gifts and his graces. It is in this disposition that we are bound to procure for him whatever may contribute to his sanctification; to rejoice at his success; share with him as far we can in his reverses and losses: to console him in his afflictions; to assist him in his necessities,

and to rescue him in his failings: to entertain a good opinion of his intentions, when the means of ascertaining them precisely are wanting: to protect him against injustice: to speak favourably of him when men are disposed to disparage him: in a word, to love him in reality; to let that love appear, not in words only, but in deeds and effects. For it is a great illusion to profess to love him, and at the same time to seek to avoid being put to any inconvenience for him; and to make no effort towards assisting him in his necessities. Charity consisteth not in fair words, but in a good will: and this good will cannot remain without effects, when we are in a situation to do a neighbour some benefit. In a word, charity is never inactive.

2.—*Jesus Christ commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves*, (St. Mark, 12. 31.) And what is it truly to love ourselves? It

is to desire to possess sovereign happiness, and to labour to attain it. Therefore to wish the same happiness to our neighbour, and to contribute as much as in us lies towards helping him to obtain it, is to love him as ourselves: and to love him in this manner is, according to St. Paul, to fulfil all the commandments that relate to our neighbour, (Rom. 13.) *Acquit yourselves,* says he, *of your debt to each one, owing nothing but the love in which all are bound to each other.* The commandments that regard our neighbour are all comprised in the few words, *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* The love which one has for one's neighbour, will not allow any wrong to be done him: neither will it allow, says St. Austin, any occasion of doing him a service to be suffered to pass by, without profiting of it.

Thus love is the fulfilment of the law: and it is not possible that any one should

take away from the person whom he sincerely loves, either his goods or his reputation; his honour, his wife, or his life, or any thing that is his. He will not deceive him by falsehood or artifice; he will not pass sentence on him without grounds, nor judge him rashly: he will not at any time wish evil to him: in a word, he will do him all the good which, under similar circumstances, he himself would look for from others: he will deal with him in all things as with himself, and as he would wish to be dealt with by others.

A genuine love of our neighbour is inseparable from the love of God. It has the love of God for its principle and motive. A real love of our neighbour wishes him the enjoyment of God: loves him, because God desires him for his own; because he belongs to God; or in order to procure him the happiness of belonging to him, if he does not already enjoy that happiness.

nd this is what it is truly to love God; love his law; to desire that he be known, oved and served. Wherefore to love our eighbour in this manner is to accomplish hatever God commands; and to love him this manner, and at the same time vio- te the law of God, are two things wholly ncompatible. It was this that made St. ohn say, that *he who loves his brother emains in the light, and that in such a one candal hath no place,* (1 John, 2.) *The harity we entertain for our neighbour overeth a multitude of sins, and effaces em from before God's sight,* (1 Pet. 4.) nsequently it is the fulfilment of the ommandments, the accomplishment of e law.

3.—St. Thomas notices three conditions hich ought to go along with the love of ur neighbour: the first is, that this love e holy. Now this cannot be without its

having a reference to God. If we wish
him the goods of this world instead of those
of heaven, our love is not holy, and it is
not charity. It is his body, and not his
soul, that we love: for if we loved h
soul, we should wish him before all thi
the virtues of religion, the grace and l
of God; the kingdom of heaven.
A second condition of the love o
neighbour is, that it be just. There
be no injustice done to the prejudice
person beloved, nor in his behalf.
not be a love offensive to God: for
not be lawful to give to a creature
due only to God: nor to enter
engagements which are sinful; n
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compliances are there for the sak
who are beloved! how much is n
from those by whom we ar
What attachments entirely hur
and profane, on one side and

gives himself up to his fellow man becomes his slave: that heart which t to belong wholly to God, is given to her; and man becomes guilty of a of idolatry.

e third condition of the love of our bour is, that it be sincere and without mulation. We must not love our bour for our own pleasure, nor for own advantage: to love him in such would be to love ourselves, not our bour. And yet the love of people for other is generally a love of this kind. e is seldom found a love truly pure disinterested. It is not God who is ause nor the motive of it: and a proof is is, that *we only love those by whom re loved:* only those from whom we received favours; our parents, our ds, our benefactors, (Matt. 5.) that *we do good to those from whom we receive or hope to receive.* (Luke, 6.) So

do sinners love, and also pagans. That is not a Christian love.

The direction of Jesus Christ to his disciples is, that they love every neighbour without exception, be he who he may; nay, even their very enemies. By this a Christian is distinguished from an infidel and from the people of this world. It is not disallowed that we entertain love for our friends; it is our duty to love them in a particular manner: it is an obligation which the law of nature points out, and it would be a sin to neglect it; but they must be loved in God and for God; and if we love them in this manner as we ought, we shall not confine our love to them only, since the same law which obliges us to love them, obliges us at the same time to extend our charity to all sorts of persons. Unless we do this, our love is not a Christian charity: not a charity which is deserving of a reward. It is not therefore a

sin to love our friends, but it is a sin to love none but our friends. Such a love of them would not be according to God's good pleasure; since he also commands us to love all men. To observe the law in one point and break it in another, is not to observe the law. It is, according to the scriptures, *to be as guilty as he who violates it wholly,* (James, 2.)

" *Make it your serious study to do no-*
" *thing that may be offensive to charity: to*
" *do for your neighbour all that you would*
" *wish him to do for you, according to the*
" *rules given; and never out of complaisance*
" *to do any thing for any one whomsoever*
" *which may be sinful in the sight of God.*
If any one say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, (1 John, 4.); *for how shall he who loveth not his brother whom he seeth, be capable of loving God whom he does not see?*

love one another, God remaineth and his love is perfected in us.

e is the only thing which distinguishes ildren of God from the children of , (St. Austin.)

Twenty-Eighth Day.

ON THE LOVE OF ENEMIES.

1.—SINCE the gospel commands us to ove our neighbour for God's sake; and commands also that nothing ever separate us from this sovereign good; so nothing ought ever to separate us from our neighbour. If we be truly dead to ourselves

to our passions, as good Christians ht to be, the ill treatment of others will re us little on our own account, but a t deal with regard to them: because fending us they cannot hurt us unless choose; while they hurt themselves eedingly by the sin which they commit. erefore Jesus Christ commands us *to our enemies, to bless those who curse to do good to those who hate us; to y for those who persecute and calum-e us,* (Matth. 5.) *If your enemy be gry,* says the apostle, *give him to eat; e be thirsty, give him to drink; for in oing you will heap coals of fire upon his l,* (Rom. 12.) By these proofs of your rity you will compel him to love you: will induce him by your patience to into himself, and to lay aside his ility: you will by your good deeds down upon him the fire of the Holy st. Suffer yourselves then not to be

able means put in your way by
God, whereby to expiate your sins;
with the evil out of a love for God.
der it too as an effect of the devil'
that invisible enemy who seduc
who wish evil to you. Call to mi
words, that *judgement without m*
be to him, who neglecteth to shew
(James, 2.) This is not a council
inviolable law. God will deal wi
we shall deal with our enemies: if
them, he too will hate us: if we
not them, neither will he pardon
if we seek to revenge ourselves,

feel the vengeance of the Lord, and God will store up his sins against him for ever, (Eccl. 28.) Shall a man entertain anger against his fellow man, and yet dare to ask God to be merciful? For a man like to himself he has no compassion; and shall he dare to ask for his own sins to be pardoned? Remember your last end, and cease to nourish enmity against any one. To be hated is not a sin, but to hate one's neighbour is a very great sin. It is not a misfortune to have enemies, but it is a great misfortune to be an enemy to any one. For this reason an ancient father says, "that a Christian is one that is an enemy to nobody:" so that our enemies are much worse off than we are, and are more to be pitied than hated. It is even a great good to have enemies, when their enmity arises from our having been faithful to our duty: and when we willingly forgive them their offences against us.

us as we forgive others. This is
Forgive and you shall be forgiven.
only forgives on condition that we
give from our hearts, (Luke, 6.)
this prayer at a time when we a
charity with our enemy, is to p
not to pardon us, and not to love
what more dreadful than such an
tion. The Son of God died for u
the time when we were his enem
he requires also that for the love c
forgive our enemies, and that we
times ready to do them all the s
our power. They have offended
we have offended him. The trans

than that we should pardon them. Failing to do this, we shall have great reason to dread that terrible sentence pronounced upon the cruel servant in the gospel, who, after a debt of ten thousand talents had been remitted to him, would not himself remit to his fellow servant a much less sum, (Matt. 18.) *Know*, says Jesus Christ, *that in such manner will my Father deal with you, if you pardon not your brethren from your hearts.*

Men frequently say, they forgive willingly: that they wish no evil to their enemy, but that they cannot bring themselves to see him, to make the first advances, to proffer their services. This is not forgiving from the heart. There is nothing of sincerity in such speeches: and it is but falling into the miserable state of that servant who had not pity. There is lodged at the bottom of the heart a remnant of hatred, a secret resentment, preventing

the parties offending from being regarded with complacency, for the heart is shut to them. Cast away then all resentment: love from the bottom of your heart: and give proofs of it by deeds of kindness. Without this you will look in vain for mercy at the hands of the Sovereign Judge.

3.—In order to be saved, it will by no means be enough, to have loved our friends, our parents, those to whom we are under obligations, nor to have done good services to these: for all this nothing more is necessary than self-love, inclination, gratitude: in all this there is nothing more than what heathens and publicans did.

Christianity reads to us a lesson of much greater perfection: and in order to be children of God, it obliges us to love even our enemies, and to return good for evil. *God causes the sun to rise upon the good and the bad,* (Matth. 5.) He is good to those

who serve him and to those who offend him: the children must be like unto their father: and those who distribute all their favours among their friends, without concerning themselves about the rest of mankind, have reason to fear that God will one day reject them as aliens and disown them as illegitimate. If God had not loved us at the time when we were his enemies, we should not be his children: and we cease to be so, from the moment that we cease to imitate him.

Let us not imagine that this commandment is impossible. God is fully acquainted with our weakness: he is full of goodness; and he knows how far his condescendance for us ought to go: but he well knows also what we are able to do when aided by his grace; and he commands nothing that is impossible. He reminds us indeed, by one of his apostles, that *what he requires of us is not painful*, (1 John, 5.)

because the love which he diffuses in our hearts renders his yoke easy and his burthen light. He only wishes that we do what is within our power by the strength which he puts into us, and that we pray to be enabled the more, where our strength is yet insufficient. True it is, that in itself there is nothing more difficult than to love an enemy; that nothing is more repugnant to corrupt nature: but Jesus died that he might merit for us grace to be able to do it: he has been the first to set us the example: and if we reply that he is a God, and that we are but weak men, he silences the remonstrance, by shewing us striking examples of men like ourselves who have performed with readiness and alacrity what to us appears to be impossible.

Joseph saved the lives of his brethren who had sought to take away his: he received with cordiality and kindness the very same persons who with so much hard-

heartedness and inhumanity had sold him to slavery; and such also was David's behaviour towards Saul, his greatest enemy. St Stephen prayed with admirable charity for those who stoned him. These examples will condemn us at the last day, unless we shall have imitated them: excuses then will not avail us.

Notwithstanding this, the greatest part of Christians in these days entertain great confidence of their salvation; while they act directly contrary to what Jesus Christ has so expressly laid down, and what all the saints have performed with such abundant charity. Every one loves his friends, his benefactors: but as to the rest of men, they are regarded only with indifference: and as to enemies, mankind consider it a great effort if they omit to do them all the harm in their power. It is a foolish attempt to seek to blind one's self in this point. The injunction of Jesus Christ is, that

them manifest their love in words
in works. We must wish well
and do them as much service as
able: we must pray for them an
favourably of them, whenever we c
without offending against truth:
help them as occasion presents itse
our goods, with our services, and
whole means.

" *Beseech God frequently that h*
" *excite in you a disposition of mind*
" *to pardon whatever offences may*
" *against you: to forget injuries: t*
" *from your heart all spite, all i*

Father, says Jesus Christ, pardon them, for they know not what they do. (Luke, 23.)

Lord, cried out holy Stephen, lay not this sin to their charge. (Acts, 7.)

Every one that hateth his brother, is a murderer; and no murderer has in him the life of grace. (1 John, 3.)

Twenty-Ninth Day.

OF FERVOUR IN THE SERVICE OF GOD.

GOD wills that he be served in a manner worthy of him; worthy of his goodness, worthy of his infinite holiness, worthy of his mercies to us, worthy of the wonders which he has performed for our salvation. From all eternity he has thought of us, has

loved us, has made choice of us. H
his Son in the flesh for the purpose
cuting his plans of mercy towards
delivered him over to death for us;
him to be our leader: in him he has
ed us to be his children: the Son
has himself given himself to us for r
ment: he has communicated his s
us for our safeguard and sanctif
Can any body invent for charity
enlargement? And after such extrao
favours, shall it be possible for u
cold and negligent in his service?
so would be a great ingratitude and
infidelity. *Remember*, says St. Paul
is the Lord whom you serve, and kee
selves in the fervour of the spirit, (R
Conceive a horror for the crime of
tude. Fear to draw upon yourself th
which is pronounced against those
the work of God negligently: for i
work of *God*, the work of your salv

To the first Christians the Holy Ghost
mmunicated himself under the figure of
e, to shew with what promptitude and
rvour we are to serve Almighty God.
sus Christ says that *he came to bring fire*
on the earth, (Luke, 12.) that fire of
arity which he wishes to see increased
ore and more. He felt an eager desire
accomplish the baptism of his blood,
at he might wash our souls therein and
complete the work of our redemption.
was the ardour of his love for us which
used in him this eagerness, and we can-
t otherwise shew a corresponding eager-
ss than by fervour in his service; that
vour which is a great gift of his grace,
d which is not to be obtained but by
nble prayer, prayer oft repeated. I ran,
ys David, in the way of thy command-
nts, when thou hadst expanded my
art, (Ps. 118.) This expansion is the
ect of his love being poured into our

hearts: and from this same love fervour is produced. A Christian soul must pray frequently, and ask for new infusions of this love, that his heart, which the love of creatures is continually contracting, being enlarged, it may be disposed to serve him with a fuller and more perfect good will; and to say with the apostle, *The love of Jesus invites us to live no longer for ourselves, nor for the world; but for him who died and rose again for our sakes,* (2 Cor. 5.)

2.—There is nothing which tends more to animate us in the service of God, than the consideration of the great examples of fervour which are to be found in the Old and New Testament: and we cannot read too often the histories of Abraham, of Job, of Moses, of David, of the holy Prophets, of the Maccabees, of Eleazer, of the seven Martyrs and their pious mother; as well as what St. Paul has written in praise of

so many good persons of the old law, in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, in order to reanimate their dying faith and to rouse them to new fervour. Zaccheus in the gospel gives us a strong example of fervour by the readiness and joy with which he runs to see Jesus Christ: he receives him into his house, promises to give half of his goods to the poor; and in case he may have done injustice to any one, he engages to restore it to them sevenfold. The sinful woman teaches us to seek Jesus with an eagerness that disregards all human respect; to bewail our sins in his presence with a lively detestation, to atone for them without hesitation by humiliations, and by observances corrective of our failings. And the centurion teaches us not to approach to our Redeemer but with a profound humility and a holy fear, which is the mark of a mind wholly given up to him. But there is nothing more edifying than to

see with what promptitude the holy virgin, after conceiving in her womb the Son of God, goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, and remains three months with her, assisting her in her wants. The whole life of this holy mother of God was a true model of Christian fervour: and, according to St. Ambrose, Jesus Christ points out to us, by the example of this admirable virgin, that his spirit endures not languor and negligence in what is done for his service; that his grace is an enemy to tardiness and delay.

Who must not blush to see that the world is served with so much ardour, and Jesus Christ with such lukewarmness and indifference, even by those who make profession of being his disciples? In observing our insensibility and indolence, one might be led to conclude that, of all masters, he is the only one whose service is uninteresting; that he is heedless of the

ttendance of his servants and backward
rewarding them. Other masters speak
nd in a moment they are obeyed; their
rders are executed with dispatch: to
lease the world nothing is forgotten: it is
ourted on all sides by every attention and
ssiduity, while in the service of Jesus
hrist all is inactivity and lethargy: leav-
ngs and remnants are his portion; and
requently nothing more than what is outside
nd empty appearance. What ingratitude!
What contempt! What injustice!

3.—Lukewarmness is one of the faults which most displease the Son of God; and it is more dangerous than people imagine. A soul that is lukewarm, if it is not already fallen into the deep abyss, is on the point of falling into it, for it is on the edge of the precipice. *I wish*, says Jesus Christ, *that thou wert either wholly cold or wholly hot; but because thou art lukewarm, and*

art neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth, (Apoc. 3.) St. Ambrose understands by one who is cold, a heathen, who has never been enlightened with the light of faith; and by one who is hot, a Christian, whose heart is all on fire with the Holy Ghost: and he declares that he who is lukewarm is in a worse state than he who is cold: by which he signifies, that a Christian who feels not the ardour of a lively faith, and who neglects his salvation, is worse than an infidel; and that it would be better for him never to have received that divine light, which only serves to render him more blameable and entirely inexcusable, than having received it, to make so little use of it.

It is lukewarmness which makes unprofitable servants; which renders ineffectual the graces of God and the mysteries of Jesus Christ; which prevents the sacraments, the examples of virtue, our own

works, from being of any avail. It s from whence ingratitude arises; or r, it is ingratitude itself. It is that, ding to St. Bernard, which dries up ource of God's mercies to us, which s on a dreadful dryness and spiritual ence. It is, in fine, what leads to ess of heart, and reduces the soul to dition in which she is no longer sus- ble of any good impression.

Examine yourself seriously in this point, see whether you are not already in state of languidness: whether you e not lost all taste for the word of l, for piety, for the things of heaven. his is the case, labour to extricate rself from such a state, as quickly as ible, and take the proper means: e are, prayer; reflection on God's yements; pious reading; meditation the truths of religion; occupation and

" industry. But above all things, never " lose sight of the momentous account which " you will have to render, one day, of the " treasures either lost or neglected during " the time that you have lived in a state of " lukewarmness."

Let all things be done with charity, (1 Cor. 16.)

Entertain for the Creator of the world as much zeal as you have had for the world, (St. Austin.)

Thirtieth Day.

OF DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND THE SAINTS.

1.—CARE must be taken that we make an essential distinction between the worship which we owe to God and his Son

Jesus Christ, and the honour and veneration we ought to pay to the Blessed Virgin and to the Saints. The worship of Almighty God is grounded upon the sovereignty of his essence, and his infinite perfections. He is Holiness itself; Power; Wisdom; Goodness; Justice: He is essentially and by his nature infinitely above any thing that we can conceive of great and excellent. Consequently the honour which is due to him is a sovereign honour: which consists in adoring him with a humility, a love, an obedience and a dependance, which places us in a state of nothingness before him: in loving him as much as we are able to love: in loving him above all things and in all things: in doing homage to him for our existence, for every good that we possess: in sacrificing all to him, and in sacrificing ourselves to his glory. This is what is called *Latria*, or Supreme Worship: a worship which places us in the

all graces, and we beseech him to grant to us, through the merits of Jesus Christ, those graces of which we stand in need. But as we know that the saints are his friends, and are allowed a near approach to him; that he has frequently lent a favourable ear to their petitions in behalf of other men, while they yet lived upon this earth, we are persuaded that now, when they are united to him in heaven, they may become powerful intercessors in our behalf. It is in this sense and with these sentiments that we address ourselves to them, when we are desirous of obtaining some favour, that they may join their prayers to ours; that they may present them to God; that they may obtain for us what they have already obtained for themselves, and what we ask for solely through the merits of Jesus Christ.

Again, as their sanctity shines at present in its greatest lustre, and is unmixed with

any defect, we view them as models for imitation, of which we are bound to exhibit in our lives a faithful copy. For this reason we ask of God grace to imitate them; and we pray to them that they will use the favour, he deigns them, to procure us that grace.

2.—But as the Blessed Virgin, by her quality of Mother of God, is above all pure creatures, and being virgin and mother at the same time, is favoured with singular privileges, we are accustomed to distinguish her from all the other saints by the honour which we pay to her. These super-eminent qualities confer upon her, in the sight of God and Jesus Christ her Son, a rank superior to that of all the angels and of all the blessed without exception. She alone makes a distinct order in herself: and she is therefore deserving of distinguished honour; but which honour is by no means

permitted to equal, nor to be compared to that which is given to the Divinity; nor to that which is due to the adorable qualities of Redeemer, Saviour, Mediator and Sovereign High Priest, with which Jesus Christ condescended to invest himself for our sakes. We regard the devotion of the church to God and to our Saviour as absolutely necessary and essential to religion; the devotion to the saints we consider to be very useful to the faithful and advantageous; a powerful resource in their necessities, and an excellent means to animate them to the service of God, and to forward their advancement in his ways.

True devotion to the Blessed Virgin then, is to unite ourselves to her, as far as our infirmity will allow, in the love which we owe to God; to love her in him and with reference to him; with a love proportionate to the wonderful and singular favours he has conferred upon her on earth

and in heaven; to honour in her the excellence of charity, of purity, of humility and of sanctity, of which he imparted to her, above all others of the elect, so abundant a share: to admire with profound respect her incomparable quality of Mother of the Son of God and Virgin at the same time; to invoke her as our Mother, our Advocate, our Patroness, in proportion to the influence which, on account of her merits, she possesses with Almighty God, more than the whole society of the saints united; to confide that she will procure for us the greatest helps in time of need; to imitate her as the most perfect model of all virtues after Jesus Christ her Son, and as the copy which comes nearest to that divine original.

Such is the economy of the true and substantial devotion of Christians to the Blessed Virgin. But to pretend that the Mother can be loved and honoured without rendering to the Son that supreme love and

honour, which are indispensibly due to him; to attempt to come to God through the intercession of the Mother, without the mediation of the Son; to shew her respect without imitating her in her virtues; without imitating Jesus Christ; without living according to the rules of his Gospel; this would be the greatest and most pernicious of all illusions.

As there is nothing more acceptable to Jesus Christ than that true devotion which is entertained for his holy Mother, so in nothing is the Mother more honoured than by the love which is entertained for her Son. We only meet with very few sayings of hers in the scripture; still it may be said that in two words she gives us the whole of the gospel; as when she says, *Whatever my Son shall say to you, that do ye,* (John, 2.) She spoke little indeed to man, but it was because she was ever occupied in listening to the word incarnate, that she

might teach us by her example to listen to him as our sole master. There was her devotion as in its chosen place; and it is her desire, no doubt, that all who have devotion for her, should place the essence of it in a like attention to the instructions of her Son. *Mary*, says the Evangelist, *kept all these words in her heart*, (Luke, 2.) She dwelt upon every the least word, and the least circumstance of her Son's life; and he has chosen to leave in his gospel this example of his holy Mother as an excellent model for imitation. Our devotion cannot be genuine, nor well regulated, unless it maintain the characteristic marks of that of the most holy of all pure creatures.

3.—All these characteristics are to be found in the gospel, if we would but take the pains to study it with attention. We shall remark the profound silence, that

the incarnation, after having rece
answer of the angel, and having
herself by assuming no higher ap
than servant, at the very time w
angel denominated her Mother of
betakes herself to her accustomed
She goes to Bethelem, that she m
the orders of a pagan emperor: t
is despised; and necessitated to
retreat in a stable; there she brin
Jesus Christ; there she beholds t
herds and wise men come and ad
Divine Saviour; she presents hi
Eternal Father in the temple; sh

sees him increase in grace and
ore than in age; sees his youth
n obscurity, in poverty, in hu-
he sees him enter upon his mi-
ie follows him; she hears him
the midst of contradictions, in
of calumnies, in the midst of
ns. Beset on all sides by wicked
sees him die upon a cross; and
se situations, and these various
ices, the gospel mentions not a
d of hers: there is nothing but
oughout the whole. At the re-
of her Son, she is not brought
tice with the others: he shews
his disciples, he ascends to hea-
ir presence, without a word of
mentioned. She joins herself to
pany and awaits the coming of
Ghost like the least of the faith-
he receives him with them. She
to the preachings of the apostles;

sees them persecuted, driven away, insulted; and on no occasion is she observed at all to speak or to interfere with any thing that is going on. Throughout she is in silence; throughout in obscurity; unnoticed, occupied with studying Jesus Christ; in forming him more and more in herself; retracing at every step the path she had seen him tread. Let us imitate the Blessed Virgin in these great examples, and our devotion to her will be sincere.

To follow then Jesus with unaltered fidelity; to listen to him when our passions are silent; to obey him; to imitate him like this holy Mother; to imitate her in her humility, her poverty, her trials, her purity, her virginity, her charity, such is true devotion to the Mother of God: such was her devotion; and shall we aim at any other? The glory and perfection of the disciple is to resemble his master. The great merit of virgins and of fathers and

mothers, of those who live in the married state and of those who do not, ought to be, to form their lives, each one according to his state, upon the examples of this Virgin Mother: to honour Jesus Christ in her and the sanctity he communicated to her; to live, to act, to pray, to suffer like her, in whatever state we may be: like her to sustain all the obligations of our state; its troubles, its contradictions; wholly giving ourselves up to Jesus Christ without murmur and without complaint.

Her whole life was a life of prayer. Let us pray like her, more in heart much than in words, and she will lend us her powerful aid. Be we sinners, or be we free from sin, let us invoke her aid in all our troubles, our miseries, our temptations. She is the refuge of sinners, who desire to return to God by true conversion: she has for them bowels of compassion: if they call upon her in due manner, they will not fail to

experience the effects of her intercession. But she is by no means an asylum or protectrix of malice, of impenitence, of obstinacy. She is the model of the just and the innocent; them she presents to her Son; for them she exerts her influence with him; for them she takes an interest in their dangers, in their temptations, in their persecutions. In these emergencies, placing our hopes in her protection we may look forward to most powerful assistance.

" *Consider attentively the whole life and* " *conduct of Mary; view yourself in her* " *as in a mirror, that you may discover* " *what there is in your life that requires to* " *be reformed, to be retrenched, to be in-* " *creased for the furtherance of your ad-* " *vancement,*" (St. Ambrose.)

Jesus said to Mary, Woman, behold thy Son: he then said to the disciple, behold thy mother, (St. John, 19.)

In order to obtain the protection of Mary, neglect not in any thing to imitate her virtues, (St. Bernard.)

A CONCISE PORTRAIT OF THE VIRTUES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN,

TAKEN FROM ST. AMBROSE,

(Book II. of Virgins.)

She was

1.—A Virgin both in body and mind,
2.—Humble of heart,
3.—Grave in speech,
4.—Prudent in her counsels,
5.—Given to labour,
6.—Reserved in discourse,
7.—Fond of reading.

She excelled

8.—In Faith,
9.—In Modesty,
0.—In Piety,
1.—In Silence.

15.—Slight the poor.

It was a principle with her

16.—To seek God alone,
17.—To live in retirement,
18.—To cause nobody trouble,
19.—To do good to all,
20.—To honour the aged,
21.—Not to envy her equals,
22.—To shun vain glory,
23.—To love virtue,
24.—To follow right reason in all thi

There never appeared any thing ligh
or fribolous

25.—In her gait,
26.—In her air

Thirty-First Day.

OF DEVOTION TO THE HOLY ANGELS.

1.—GOD had created in the beginning of the world a great number of pure spirits, who might know him, love him and enjoy him throughout all eternity. Their nature was excellent, perfectly holy and innocent, adorned with all the graces and all the brightness that were suitable to their state. Their will, well regulated and tending to sovereign good in all its inclinations, was still not immutable: it was able to persevere in good, but it was also liable to fall from its happy state, and be corrupted.

One of the most exalted among them, having his attention attracted to his great virtues and excellent qualifications, instead of giving all the glory to God, as to the source of all excellence, was filled with self-

themselves to him, and, following his
ple, fell with him into an abyss of pe
Hell was then made and appointe
their place of punishment for all e
On the other hand, the rest, adhe
their leader, whom the scripture ca
chael,* remained faithful and true
grace of their first creation; they wit
bravely those apostates; declared f
Creator, acknowledged that nothi
like to him, and that he deserved al
be loved, obeyed, adored; and wi
found humility they gave to him th
of their existence, and of whatev
possessed of excellence. God in

'or their fidelity, infused into them, ng to St. Austin, a fulness and an ance of charity, by which they are ably attached to him, and by which nal possession of the happiness they rited was secured to them.

former ones, those who fell, became, their pride and ambition, the un victims of divine vengeance, and at ne time the unrelenting ministers of those among mankind who imitate their sin. Enemies of whatever is envious of man's happiness, they our first parents to fall; and spread mselves, by God's permission, over th in great numbers, they are wholly ed with the endeavour to draw his n to evil: to invite them, to tempt to seduce them, to lay snares for hat they may make them their com s in misfortune by making them ac ces in crime. These endeavours of

even yet they hold under their do
extensive countries and numerous p
and among Christians also, by a d
effect of God's judgements, they find
to seduce, to corrupt and to dest
infinite number of souls redeemed w
blood of Christ. The scripture, in
to inspire us with horror for these mo
of malice, gives them the odious na
Demons and Devils. Jesus Chris
in order to point out the great power
sin gives them over man, says, that
who sin are slaves and children
devil: and he gives the name of *d*

2.—On the other hand, the spirits who mained in truth, and who adhered faithlly to God, became messengers of peace, nd are employed as ministers of his grace nd mercy. He sends them to execute e orders of his wisdom in favour of those mong mankind *who are destined to receive ossession of celestial inheritance* (Heb. 1.): ver such these blessed spirits continually atch like guardians; take care of them, nstruct them, admonish them, put them n their guard against the wiles and attacks f the evil spirits: for such is the office ssigned to them by Almighty God. The cripture gives them the name of Angels, hich signifies persons sent, because they re sent by God to exercise the ministry of eace and grace.

He made use of them, in the old law, to eliver his people out of Egypt; to give hem his law, to conduct them through the esart, to feed them with manna, and to

establish them in the promised land, (Exod.) He made use of one of them to be a guide to the younger Toby, during a long journey, and to impart to him and all his family the abundant blessings of heaven, (Tobias.) He makes use of them still, to procure to Christians aid and relief in their numerous wants, during this life; more particularly in their spiritual necessities and the business of their salvation; in consideration of which all things else are nothing. He sends his angel before us to point out to us the way to heaven, to encourage us in the journey, and lead us by the hand like little children (Exod. 23.): and at death, the same will introduce us into that place of rest and happiness, which Almighty God has prepared for us to all eternity.

Nay, according to the royal prophet, he has given express order to his angels to guard us in all our ways, (Ps. 90.) in health or sickness, in adversity or in prosperity,

mptation or in tranquility, in danger
t of danger. He will have them to
us in their hands when we are weak,
hen there is some wrong step to be
mended, lest we hurt our feet against
stone; and lest, by meeting with
dangerous occasion, some object that
to evil, or some bad example, we be
n into sin. They smoothen for us the
; they remove us from danger, or de-
us when in it; they put in our way
eans of doing good, and take away
us the means of doing evil: they ex-
e wicked spirit, and secure us against
ares and artifices: they cause us to
advantage from our temptations, nay
from our very failings; they prevent us
being led away by the attractions of
orld; they throw in among them a
some bitterness, which exposes their
ation and causes a dislike for them:

desires and our vows, when we find ourselves languid, overpowered and embarrassed; sincere friends, powerful protectors, safe guides, faithful guardians, they never abandon us unless compelled to do it by our ingratitude and obstinacy. All this deserves, no doubt, our grateful acknowledgements, and in this we cannot be wanting without being criminal.

d. But, not to shew them ready obedience when they communicate to us God's orders, when they admonish us or threaten us, or correct us: not to avail ourselves with alacrity of the advantages of their charity, and their zeal for our advancement, would be to draw down upon us the anger of God himself, who makes use of these heavenly spirits to make known to us his good pleasure; to reprehend us when we have done wrong; to remind us of our duties, and to actuate us by his inspirations.

vertheless goes forward; and unless we
e ungrateful, we cannot help experiencing
e efficacy of it in a thousand emergencies,
herein we should perish both soul and
dy, did not divine providence protect us
so many miracles as it were through the
inistry of these happy spirits.

3.—The excellency of their nature, their
oliness, their happiness; their fidelity in
xecuting the orders of God; their ministry
our behalf; the great helps we receive
y them; all these considerations oblige
s, no doubt, to honour God in them; to
onour his gifts and his marvellous pro-
edings. We cannot without ingratitude
fuse them our respect, our love, our
knowledgements; and we cannot, with-
t being guilty of a negligence hurtful
our salvation, refuse to obey them, to
oke them, and to imitate them in their
rtues.

a. Respect the Angel who conducts you, says the Holy Ghost himself; take heed that you do not despise him, for he will not overlook it when you shall sin. We owe to the Angels, says St. Bernard, (in Ps. 90.) a profound respect, for their presence sake, so that we must not contristate them, nor draw upon ourselves their indignation by doing evil before them, or by being to others, whose safety is confided to their care, the cause of evil: whether by solicitation, by counsel or example. They take cognizance of our actions and our proceedings: they hear our discourses, they are acquainted with our plans. In whatever place you may happen to be, in darkness or in the light, says this saint, entertain a profound respect for your Angel guardian: let it never happen that you be guilty of any thing in his presence which you would be ashamed to do before me. *Jesus Christ also admonishes us to*

shew regard to little children on account of their Angels, who always see the face of his heavenly Father, (Matt. 18.) lest if we be to those children a cause of scandal and of sin, their angels revenge the injury.

5. Shall we be able to refuse our love to creatures so perfect, so united to God, so rich in his graces, in wisdom, in charity? Creatures of such eminent purity and sanctity; who are objects of God's eternal love, and who love us with so disinterested a love? Should we not be wanting in the love we owe to God, who communicates himself to them and to us, through their means, in so particular a manner? It is his desire that we love him in his friends, in his saints, in his ministers.

6. Always present to us in our necessities, always ready to reach out their hand to us, to carry to the throne of God our

however hard it may appear; t
humbly embrace the meanest a
contemptible employments and ex
that we give our services to the poo
miserable, the abandoned, when
occasion appears to be put in our
Almighty God: all this is to imi
Angels: it is to do what they d
day: and to be deficient in this mu
displease them.

Jesus Christ teaches us to ask
that we may do his will on earth
Angels do it in heaven. They h
will but his; they never delay one
to fulfil it as soon as it is made kn
them: they never go beyond his
they no sooner have accomplished t
appointed them, than they quietly
their station and await anew his
their whole object is to please Go
never lose sight of him; and the
lose sight of their own nothingnes

when their employment is directed to persons the most unworthy; but remain, as it were, annihilated in the presence of his majesty. Behold the model of that obedience and humility, which God requires of us. While we are attentive to perform what we owe to him, let us never forget what he prescribes to be done to our neighbour, even to those who deserve it the least. Let us be covered with confusion at finding ourselves proud, overbearing, fastidious, presumptuous, disdainful, contemptuous, seeing these princes of the heavenly court come to us and humble themselves, as we may say, at our feet.

Ever indefatigable in the continued combat which they have to sustain against the evil spirits, those mortal enemies of God and of his servants, they apply themselve unceasingly to repel them with the arms of God; to oppose against their wiles ar artifices the skilfulness of their wisdo

to render abortive their plans and schemes of fury. Let us join ourselves to these holy Angels; let us fight like them and with them, courageous like them: we must either fight or perish eternally; and without fighting, victory is not attainable. If these seducers solicit us, let us answer with the prince of the heavenly army, "*Who upon the earth shall be able to be like to God?*" Is there any thing in this world that can be preferable to him, or equal? In a word, let us persevere like these blessed spirits; let us in our troubles imitate their devoted resignation; in the smallest things, their fidelity: and let us not, any more than they do, abandon the work of God, cost what it may, until we shall have entirely accomplished it.

"*Be you wherever you may, the holy*
"*Angels see you: watch over yourselves*
"*with circumspection, that nothing may be*

"found in you at which they can take "offence. Live so as to engage them on "your side in the spiritual combat, which "you have to wage against the enemies of "your salvation."

If God has given orders to his Angels that they keep you in all your ways, (Ps. 90.)

In whatever place you may be, remember always the respect you owe to your Angel Guardian, (St. Bernard.)

OF THE

Purity of Morals

REQUIRED BY THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

1.—THERE are many points in which ıe Christian religion differs from other ·ligions: but the principal point, as far ; human actions are considered, is, that hristianity absolutely condemns sin. The ıgan religion allowed and authorised ·imes, against which nature revolted. ·either is it to be wondered at. A reli-

pure
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There is no other but the Christian religion which forbids in general and in particular every kind of vice; for, as St. Gregory of Nyssa says, it imitates God; whose will being rectitude itself, is incompatible with disorder and vice.

2.—Our religion does not only condemn great sins; it forbids also the smallest faults, even words, which are offensive to charity or to modesty; be it in any so small degree: even looks that are but unguarded: what then shall we say of those that are lascivious? also motions and airs which may offend or scandalize our neighbour. Murder was forbidden in the old law, but in the new, an ebullition of anger, a word of animosity or contempt, an expression of vehemence, a disdain, are so many faults, which render us culpable in the sight of God.

What do I say? words that are even obliging, when they are not sincere; those officious lies, which seem to originate in a good principle, and which are spoken with a kind intention, are not allowed to a Christian; because all lying, of whatever kind, is contrary to the law of nature.

Vain and unprofitable words are also considered to be sinful: although in themselves they be neither contrary to charity, nor to modesty, nor untrue, we shall have to give an account of them at the day of judgement; on the charge of their not being referable to that object, to which all our actions ought to be referred. And if unprofitable words are forbidden, what shall be said of actions that are unprofitable?

3.—Christianity does not only condemn actions and words that are criminal and bad: it condemns the will and the desire

to sin. Human laws can indeed forbid theft and murder, but not the will to do them; the heart comes not under the jurisdiction of man; that is subject to the Divine law alone, because the Divine Legislator is the master of the heart. But yet of the different dispensations of Almighty God, this is what is peculiar to the Christian law; it is this wherein it is principally distinguishable from the law of the synagogue.

In the church of Jesus Christ, God asks not for bloody victims upon his altars; but in the room of the blood of goats and of oxen, he asks, says Lactantius, for an innocent soul. It is then by no means enough that my hands be clean, my eyes modest, my mouth chaste, it is requisite that my heart be pure; and if I give myself up to a bad desire at the sight of a woman, I am guilty of a crime before God.

It is the assertion of Christ himself; and in order to understand well his doctrine, it must be remarked, that we have in us a concupiscence, which is a fatal inheritance from our first father; and which theologians call *fomes peccati*, the fuel of sin by which the pernicious flame of concupiscence is lighted up and nourished: for being once on fire, it inflames the will, and bears it on to badness. So that the will being inflamed and hurried out of itself, experiences sensations of two different kinds: one, of those involuntary sensations, which without deliberation arise immediately at first sight of any object that presents itself, before reason is aware of it: the other, of those sensations which are voluntary, and are continued after reason and reflection have apprised us of their existence. The first of these are not of themselves sinful, because they are not dependent on choice,

provided we give not occasion to them, nor neglect to put ourselves on our guard against that which excites them. Where there is not liberty, there cannot be sin: and these sensations arise in us without our consent. But those of the second kind are sinful; because with God's help we have the power of subduing them: and these are those bad desires, those adulteries of the heart, which Jesus Christ forbids to Christians. And yet, although the Christian religion does not condemn the first kind of sensations as sins, it condemns them as the effects of an inordinate concupiscence; and it prescribes that we disavow them, and that we detest them, because they are the punishment of sin and also the source of it.

4.—The purity of the Christian religion goes still further: it forbids even the

ourselves from it, however dear it may be, or however much the separation may cost. Our Saviour does not only say, *pluck out thine eye*, but, *cast it from thee*, to shew us that we must remove from occasions and from companies that are dangerous.

6.—The Christian religion, in order to point out the extreme horror it has for sin, does all it can to tear it out by the very roots. For this end it seeks to excite in us a contempt for the goods of this earth, which are the causes and the source of sins; not indeed in themselves, but by the bad use we make of them. So that the maxims, the precepts, the counsels of the gospel tend to this, that we despise, that we trample under foot, that we relinquish entirely the goods of the world, riches, honours, pleasures; even those which otherwise are lawful, whenever the use of

them becomes dangerous. St. Cyril makes the observation, that it was forbidden to the Nazarites not only to drink wine, but even to eat grapes, because the one was the production of the other; and because man is easily led on to pleasure; for the root of pleasure is in his very frame. Thus Christianity not only forbids sin, but also every thing that leads to it.

In fine, Christianity directs that we fly even the very shadow of sin. Refrain yourselves, says St. Paul, from every thing that has the appearance of sin, that you may fulfil the duties of your vocation and be worthy children of the church, which has neither spot nor wrinkle. We ought to be holy because we serve him who is holiness itself. So shall we be his representatives on earth, so shall we make him known to the infidel, so shall we sanctify his name: and there is nothing which he

more recommends to us, than that we honour him before men by the purity of our lives; that seeing our good works they be led to give to him the glory due.

Let him that is holy, be holy still; and let him who is just be justified still, (Apoc.)

A Prayer.

JESUS, my Redeemer, my Lord, my God, grant me the grace of a p memory, that I may ever think with jo God and on eternity.

Grant me holy cogitations; a will rig regulated and conformable to thine, and sires ever eager for thy heavenly kingdo

A faith regardless of this world, willingly embracing poverty, afflictions affronts.

Grant me to fly from all seducing lights.

A firm hope in the promises of God.

A fear of God more operative and impressive than the evils and temptations of the age.

A love of God that may draw increase both from prosperity and adversity.

A heart alive to thy graces and docile to thy inspirations; a heart ever improving in the science of salvation; ever watchful over my senses, keeping them in due subjection by continual mortification: a heart contrite and humble, pure and ardent.

A reason subjected to faith, and senses subjected to reason.

A tongue inoffensive, sanctified by silence and the praises of God.

Eyes chaste, more acquainted with heaven than with earth.

Ears free from curiosity, shut to the world, and open only to God's word.

Hands active, patient of labour, and given to works of charity and humility.

Feet turned from the world, and steadily pursuing their course.

Sleep, such as necessity only may require.

Watching that may make up for lost time.

A penitential sadness operative of salvation.

All the affections of the heart regulated by charity.

A uniform life supported by faith.

Days full of good works.

A Christian life, wise and circumspect, like the life of one who must shortly die.

A tranquil death; like that of one destined to live eternally.

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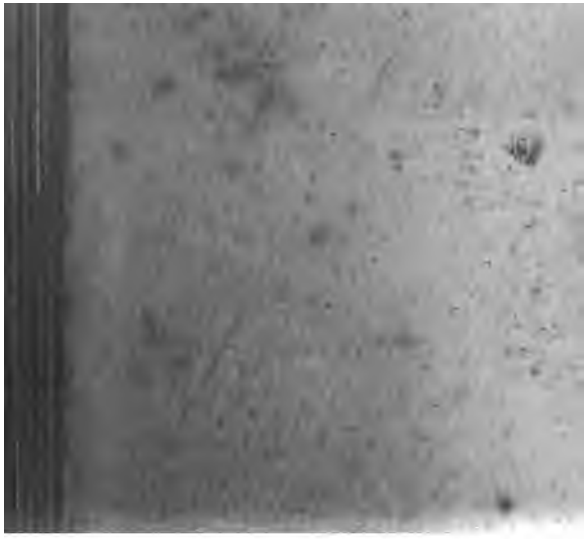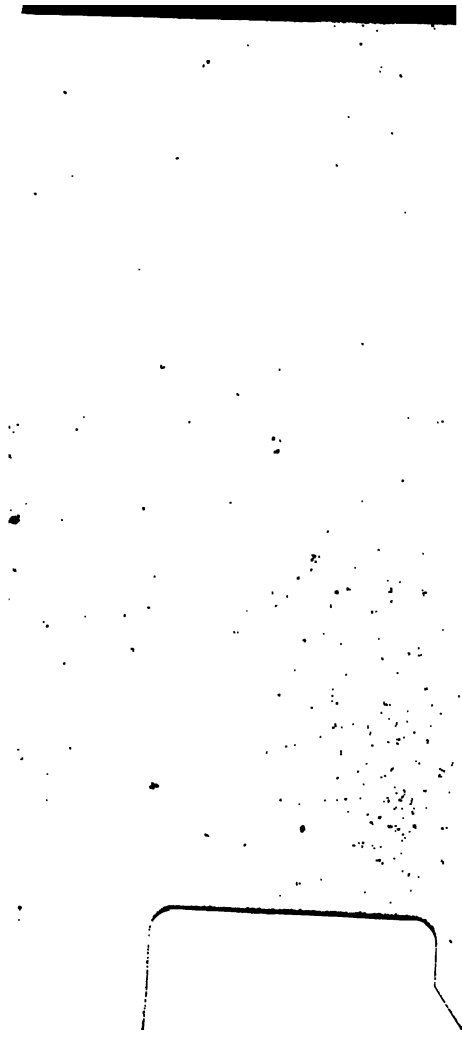
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